اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ۙ

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah Al-Anam (The Cattle)

سُوْرَةُ الْاَنْعَامِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمٰتِ وَالنُّوْرَ ثُمَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُوْنَ ۝١

(6:1) All praise is for Allah alone, Who created the heavens and the earth, and brought into being light and darkness, and yet those who have rejected the call of the Truth ascribe others to be equals to their Lord. (1)

(1) Remember that, although polytheists, the Arabs to whom these verses are addressed did acknowledge God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who causes day to alternate with night, and Who has brought into existence the sun and the moon. None of them attributed any of these acts to either al-LAt, al-Hubal, al-'UzzA or any other deities. Why, then, ‘should they prostrate themselves before others beside the Creator? Why should they offer their prayers and supplication to any but God? (See Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I, (Surah 1, n. 2), and (Surah 2, n.163) The actual word that has been used in the original text for 'darkness' is in the plural. The contrast with the singular 'light' is significant: whereas light is one, there can be innumerable degrees of darkness, which is the absence of light.

هُوَالَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ ثُمَّ قَضٰٓى اَجَلًا ۭ وَاَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِنْدَهٗ ثُمَّ اَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُوْنَ ۝٢

(6:2) He it is Who has created you out of clay, (2) and then decreed a term (of life), and has also appointed another term, a term determined with Him. (3) Yet you are in doubt!

(3) This alludes to the Hour of Judgement when human beings, regardless of the age in which they lived, will be brought back to life and summoned to render an account before their Lord.

وَهُوَ اللّٰهُ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ یَعۡلَمُ سِرَّکُمۡ وَ جَہۡرَکُمۡ وَ یَعۡلَمُ مَا تَکۡسِبُوۡنَ ﴿۳﴾

(6:3) And He it is Who is One True God in the heavens and in the earth. He knows your deeds - both secret and open - and knows fully whatever you earn.

وَ مَا تَاۡتِیۡہِمۡ مِّنۡ اٰیَۃٍ مِّنۡ اٰیٰتِ رَبِّہِمۡ اِلَّا کَانُوۡا عَنۡہَا مُعۡرِضِیۡنَ ﴿۴﴾

(6:4) Yet every time a sign of their Lord comes to them, they turn away from it,

فَقَدۡ کَذَّبُوۡا بِالۡحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَہُمۡ ؕ فَسَوۡفَ یَاۡتِیۡہِمۡ اَنۡۢبٰٓؤُا مَا کَانُوۡا بِہٖ یَسۡتَہۡزِءُوۡنَ ﴿۵﴾

(6:5) and thus they gave the lie to the Truth that has now come to them. Soon they will come upon some news concerning what they had mocked at. (4)

(4) The allusion is to the Migration (Hijrah) and the numerous victories destined to follow it in quick succession. When this allusion was made, the unbelievers could not have guessed what kind of news they would receive, and even the Muslims could not have imagined those developments. Infect, the Prophet himself (peace be on him) was not fully aware of the possibilities which lay in store.

اَلَمۡ یَرَوۡا کَمۡ اَہۡلَکۡنَا مِنۡ قَبۡلِہِمۡ مِّنۡ قَرۡنٍ مَّکَّنّٰہُمۡ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ مَا لَمۡ نُمَکِّنۡ لَّکُمۡ وَ اَرۡسَلۡنَا السَّمَآءَ عَلَیۡہِمۡ مِّدۡرَارًا ۪ وَّ جَعَلۡنَا الۡاَنۡہٰرَ تَجۡرِیۡ مِنۡ تَحۡتِہِمۡ فَاَہۡلَکۡنٰہُمۡ بِذُنُوۡبِہِمۡ وَ اَنۡشَاۡنَا مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِہِمۡ قَرۡنًا اٰخَرِیۡنَ ﴿۶﴾

(6:6) Have they not seen how many a people We have destroyed before them? People whom We had made more powerful in the earth than you are and upon them We showered from the heavens abundant rains, and at whose feet We caused the rivers to flow? And then (when they behaved ungratefully) We

destroyed them for their sins, and raised other peoples in their place.

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتٰبًا فِيْ قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوْهُ بِاَيْدِيْهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝٧

(6:7) (O Messenger!) Had We sent down to you a book inscribed on parchment, and had they even touched it with their own hands, the unbelievers would still have said: 'This is nothing but plain magic.'

وَقَالُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ ۭ وَلَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَّقُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنْظَرُوْنَ ۝٨

(6:8) They also say: 'Why has no angel been sent down to this Prophet?' (5) Had We sent down an angel, the matter would surely have long been decided and no respite would have been granted them. (6)

(5) The unbelievers were saying that if Muhammed (peace be on him) had indeed been endowed with prophethood, an angel should have been sent down from heaven to announce that he was the Messenger of God, and that that people would be punished if they did not follow his directives. It was astonishing to these ignorant objectors that the Creator of the heavens and the earth should appoint someone as His Messenger and then leave him without protection against the physical hurts and insults that were flung at him. They would have expected the envoy of a Sovereign as great as the Creator of the universe to be accompanied by at least some heavenly constable, if not a large retinue, to protect him!

(6) The unbelievers' objection is refuted by this remark. it warns them that the time available for accepting the true faith and bringing about the required reform in their lives will last only as long as Ultimate Reality remains concealed from human perception by the wheel of the Unseen. Once that wheel is removed, there will be no more respite: the summons to God's reckoning will have come. This earthly life is a test of whether a man is able to recognize the Ultimate Reality - even though it lies

hidden from his sense perception - by the correct exercise of his reason and intellect and of whether, having once recognized it, he is able to behave in conformity with that Reality by exercising control over his animal self and its lusts. This test necessarily requires that the Reality should remain concealed. Thereafter man will be confronted with the result of the test rather than by any further test. Until God has decided to bring the term of their test to a close, it is not possible to respond to such requests by sending angels to them in their true form. (See also Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I, (Surah 2, n.228.)

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنٰهُ مَلَكًا لَّجَعَلْنٰهُ رَجُلًا وَّلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّا يَلْبِسُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾

(6:9) Had We appointed an angel, We would have sent him down in the form of a man - and thus We would have caused them the same doubt which they now entertain. (7)

(7) This is the second point in response to the unbelievers' objection. One possible form in which the angel could have appeared is in its true, non-terrestrial form. It has already been pointed out that the time for this has not arrived. Alternatively, angels could have come down in human form. But this would have left the unbelievers facing the same difficulty as they faced with regard to whether the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had been designated by God or not.

وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِيْنَ سَخِرُوْا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾

(6:10) And indeed before your time (O Muhammad!) many a Messenger has been scoffed at; but those who mocked at them were encompassed by the Truth they had scoffed at.

قُلْ سِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ ثُمَّ انْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾

(6:11) Say: 'Go about journeying the earth, and behold the end of those who gave the lie (to the Truth).' (8)

(8) The archaeological remains and historical records of the ancient nations testify to how they met their tragic ends through turning away from truth and honesty and stubbornly persisting in their devotion to falsehood.

قُلۡ لِّمَنۡ مَّا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ قُلۡ لِّلّٰہِ ؕ کَتَبَ عَلٰی نَفۡسِہِ الرَّحۡمَۃَ ؕ لَیَجۡمَعَنَّکُمۡ اِلٰی یَوۡمِ الۡقِیٰمَۃِ لَا رَیۡبَ فِیۡہِ ؕ اَلَّذِیۡنَ خَسِرُوۡۤا اَنۡفُسَہُمۡ فَہُمۡ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲﴾

(6:12) Ask then: 'To whom belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth?' (9) Say: 'Everything belongs to Allah.' He has bound Himself to the exercise of mercy (and thus does not chastise you for your disobedience and excesses instantly). Surely He will gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection - the coming of which is beyond doubt; but those who have courted their own ruin are not going to believe.

(9) The subtlety of this expression should not go unnoticed. The unbelievers are asked to whom belongs whatever exists in either the heavens or on the earth. The inquirer then pauses to wait for the answer. Those questioned are themselves convinced that all belongs to God, yet while they dare not respond falsely, they are nevertheless not prepared to give the correct answer. Fearing that their response may be used as an argument against their polytheistic beliefs, they keep quiet. At this, the inquirer is told to answer the question himself and to say that all belongs to God.

وَ لَہٗ مَا سَکَنَ فِی الَّیۡلِ وَ النَّہَارِ ؕ وَ ہُوَ السَّمِیۡعُ الۡعَلِیۡمُ ﴿۱۳﴾

(6:13) And to Him belongs all that dwells in the night and the day. He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

قُلۡ اَغَیۡرَ اللّٰہِ اَتَّخِذُ وَلِیًّا فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ وَ ہُوَ یُطۡعِمُ وَ لَا یُطۡعَمُ ؕ قُلۡ اِنِّیۡۤ اُمِرۡتُ اَنۡ اَکُوۡنَ اَوَّلَ مَنۡ اَسۡلَمَ وَ لَا تَکُوۡنَنَّ مِنَ الۡمُشۡرِکِیۡنَ ﴿۱۴﴾

(6:14) Say: 'Shall I take for my guardian anyone other than Allah - the Originator of the heavens and earth; He Who feeds and Himself is not fed?' (10) Say: 'Surely I have been commanded to be the first among those who submit (to Allah)

and not to be one of those who associate others with Allah in His divinity (even though others may do so).'

(10) This remark contains a subtle sarcasm. Far from providing sustenance to their followers, the beings whom the polytheists set up as deities beside the true God were dependent upon them for their sustenance. No Pharaoh can maintain the pomp and splendor connected with his godhead unless his subjects pay their tax dues and make him other offerings. No deity can attract worshippers unless some of its devotees make an idol, place it in some magnificent temple, and decorate it lavishly. All these counterfeit gods are totally dependent upon their own servants. It is the Lord of the Universe alone Who is the True God, Whose godhead rests solely upon His own power; Who needs the help of no one, whereas no one can dispense with His.

قُلۡ اِنِّیۡۤ اَخَافُ اِنۡ عَصَیۡتُ رَبِّیۡ عَذَابَ یَوۡمٍ عَظِیۡمٍ ﴿۱۵﴾

(6:15) Say: 'Surely do I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of an awesome Day.

مَنۡ یُّصۡرَفۡ عَنۡهُ یَوۡمَئِذٍ فَقَدۡ رَحِمَهٗ ؕ وَ ذٰلِکَ الۡفَوۡزُ الۡمُبِیۡنُ ﴿۱۶﴾

(6:16) Whosoever has been spared chastisement on that Day, Allah has bestowed His mercy upon him. That is the manifest triumph.

وَ اِنۡ یَّمۡسَسۡکَ اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا کَاشِفَ لَهٗۤ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ وَ اِنۡ یَّمۡسَسۡکَ بِخَیۡرٍ فَهُوَ عَلٰی کُلِّ شَیۡءٍ قَدِیۡرٌ ﴿۱۷﴾

(6:17) Should Allah touch you with affliction, there is none to remove it but He; and should He touch you with good, He has the power to do everything.

وَ هُوَ الۡقَاهِرُ فَوۡقَ عِبَادِهٖ ؕ وَ هُوَ الۡحَکِیۡمُ الۡخَبِیۡرُ ﴿۱۸﴾

(6:18) He has the supreme hold over His servants. He is All-Wise, All-Aware.

قُلۡ اَیُّ شَیۡءٍ اَکۡبَرُ شَهَادَةً ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ ۙ شَهِیۡدٌۢ بَیۡنِیۡ وَ بَیۡنَکُمۡ ؕ وَ اُوۡحِیَ اِلَیَّ هٰذَا الۡقُرۡاٰنُ
لِاُنۡذِرَکُمۡ بِهٖ وَ مَنۡۢ بَلَغَ ؕ اَئِنَّکُمۡ لَتَشۡهَدُوۡنَ اَنَّ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اٰلِهَةً اُخۡرٰی ؕ قُلۡ لَّاۤ اَشۡهَدُ ۚ قُلۡ اِنَّمَا هُوَ
اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ وَّ اِنَّنِیۡ بَرِیۡٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشۡرِکُوۡنَ ﴿۱۹﴾

(6:19) Ask them: 'Whose testimony is the greatest?' Say: 'Allah is the witness between me and you; (11) and this Qur'an was revealed to me that I should warn you thereby and also whomsoever it may reach.' Do you indeed testify that there are other gods with Allah? (12) Say: 'I shall never testify such a thing.' (13) Say: 'He is the One God and I am altogether averse to all that you associate with Him in His divinity.'

(11) God Himself witnesses that the Prophet (peace be on him) has been designated by Him and that what he communicated was by His command.

(12) In order to bear witness to something, mere guesswork and imagination are not sufficient. What is required is knowledge on the basis of which a person can state something with full conviction. Hence. the question means: Did they really have knowledge of anyone other than God who could lay claim to man's worship and absolute service by dint of being the omnipotent sovereign, the one whose will prevailed throughout the universe?

(13) The interlocutor is instructed to tell people that if they wanted to bear false witness and testify without knowledge, they could do so, but that he himself could not do something so unreasonable.

اَلَّذِیۡنَ اٰتَیۡنٰهُمُ الۡکِتٰبَ یَعۡرِفُوۡنَهٗ کَمَا یَعۡرِفُوۡنَ اَبۡنَآءَهُمۡ ؕ اَلَّذِیۡنَ خَسِرُوۡۤا اَنۡفُسَهُمۡ فَهُمۡ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ
﴿۲۰﴾

(6:20) Those whom We have given the Book will recognize this just as they recognize their own offspring; (14) but those who have courted their own ruin will not believe.

(14) Those who have knowledge of the Scriptures know for sure that God is One alone and that no one shares His godhead with

Him. It is true that one can spot one's own child even in the midst of a large crowd of children. The same can be said about those well-versed in the Scriptures. Even if the true concept of godhead were interspersed among numerous false beliefs and concepts about God, those well-versed in the scriptural lore would be able to recognize without doubt which doctrine was true.

وَ مَنۡ اَ ظۡلَمُ مِمَّنِ ان۪ تَرٰی عَلَی اللّٰہِ کَذِبًا اَوۡ کَذَّبَ بِاٰیٰتِہٖ ؕ اِنَّہٗ لَا یُفۡلِحُ الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ ﴿۲۱﴾

(6:21) And who could be more wrong-doing than he who either foists a lie on Allah (15) or gives the lie to His signs? (16) Surely such wrong-doers shall not attain success.

(15) This refers to those who asserted that there were also other beings which shared with God in His godhead, were possessed of divine attributes and powers, and rightly deserved to claim from man worship and absolute service. It is also a slander to claim that God has selected certain beings to be His chosen intimates and that lie has commanded - or is at least agreeable to the idea - that they should he considered to possess divine attributes, and that people should serve and revere them as they would serve and revere God, their Lord.

(16) By 'signs of God' are meant the signs found within man's own being, as well as those scattered throughout the universe. They also include the signs which are manifest from the lives and achievements of the Prophets, as well as those embodied in the Scriptures. All these point towards one and the same truth - that in the entire realm of existence there is one God alone and that all else are merely His subjects. Who could be more unjust than one who, in utter disregard of all these signs, invests others than the One True God with attributes of godhead, considering them to merit the same rights as God. And does so merely on grounds of either conjecture, or speculation or out of blind adherence to the beliefs of his forefathers although there is not so much as a shred of evidence founded on true knowledge, observation or experience in support of such beliefs. Such a person subjects truth and reality to grave injustice. He also wrongs his own self

and everything else in this universe with which he has to deal on the basis of this false assumption.

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَيْنَ شُرَكَاؤُكُمُ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

(6:22) And on the Day when We shall gather them all together, We shall ask those who associated others with -Allah in His divinity: 'Where, now, are your partners whom you imagined (to have a share in the divinity of Allah)?'

ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا وَاللَّهِ رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

(6:23) Then they will be able to play no mischief but will say (falsely): 'By Allah, our Lord, we associated none (with You in Your divinity).'

انْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

(6:24) Behold, how they will lie against themselves and how their forged deities will forsake them!

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۚ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

(6:25) And of them there are some who appear to pay heed to you, but upon their hearts We have laid coverings so they understand it not; and in their ears, heaviness (so they hear not). (17) Even if they were to witness every sign, they would still not believe in it so much so that when they come to you, they dispute with you, those who disbelieve contend: 'This is nothing but fables of the ancient times.' (18)

(17) It is noteworthy that God attributes to Himself all that happens in the world as a result of the laws of nature. Since these laws were made by God Himself, the effects which result from their operation are also ultimately due to the will and permission of God. The refusal on the part of unbelievers to heed the call of

the Truth even when it is clear and audible stems from their obstinacy, prejudice, mental rigidity and inertia. It is a law of nature that when a man is not prepared to rise above prejudice in his quest for the Truth, his heart closes to every truth which is opposed to his desires. We can describe this condition by saying that the heart of that person has become sealed and when God describes it He does so by saying that He had sealed the heart of the person concerned. The explanation of this Paradox is that whereas we describe merely an incident, God describes its ultimate cause.

(18) Whenever ignorant people are called to the Truth they are liable to say that there is nothing novel about it, that it is merely a repetition of things that have come down from the past, as if in their view every truth must be new, and whatever is old must of necessity be false, although Truth has always been one and the same and will remain so. All those who have come forward to lead people in the light of God-given knowledge have been preaching one and the same Truth from time immemorial, and all those who will benefit from this valuable source of human knowledge in the future are bound to repeat the same old truths. Novelties can be invented only by those who, being bereft of the light of Divine guidance, are incapable of perceiving the eternal Truth, preferring to weave altogether new ideas out of their imagination and to put them forward as truth.

وَهُم يَنهَونَ عَنهُ وَيَنـَٔونَ عَنهُ وَإِن يُهلِكُونَ إِلَّآ أَنفُسَهُم وَمَا يَشعُرُونَ ٢٦

(6:26) As for others, they prevent them from embracing the Truth; and themselves, they flee from it (so as to harm you). But they court their own ruin, although they do not realize it.

وَلَو تَرَىٰٓ إِذ وُقِفُوا عَلَى ٱلنَّارِ فَقَالُوا يَٰلَيتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلَا نُكَذِّبَ بِـَٔايَٰتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلمُؤمِنِينَ ٢٧

(6:27) If you could but see when they shall be made to stand by the Fire! They will plead: 'Would that we were brought back to life? Then we would not give the lie to the signs of our Lord and would be among the believers.'

لَ بَدَا لَهُم مِّن قَبلُ ۖ وَلَو رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنهُ وَإِنَّهُم لَكَٰذِبُونَ ٢٨

(6:28) No! They will say this merely because the Truth which they had concealed will become obvious to them; (19) or else if they were sent back, they would still revert to what was forbidden to them. (So this plea of theirs would be a lie too) for they are just liars.

(19) At that moment such a statement on their part would not be indicative of either any true change of heart or of any genuinely revised judgement based on serious reflection and reasoning. It would rather be the result of direct observation of reality at a time when even the staunchest unbeliever would find it impossible to deny it.

وَقَالُوا إِن هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنيَا وَمَا نَحنُ بِمَبعُوثِينَ ٢٩

(6:29) They say now: 'There is nothing but the life of this world, and we shall not be raised from the dead.'

وَلَو تَرَىٰ إِذ وُقِفُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِم ۚ قَالَ أَلَيسَ هَٰذَا بِالحَقِّ ۚ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا ۚ قَالَ فَذُوقُوا العَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُم تَكفُرُونَ ٣٠

(6:30) If you could but see when they will be made to stand before their Lord. He will say: 'Is not this the truth?' They will say: 'Yes indeed, by our Lord. 'Whereupon He will say: 'Taste the chastisement, then, for your denying the Truth.'

قَد خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَتهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغتَةً قَالُوا يَا حَسرَتَنَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطنَا فِيهَا وَهُم يَحمِلُونَ أَوزَارَهُم عَلَىٰ ظُهُورِهِم ۚ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ ٣١

(6:31) Those who consider it a lie that they will have to meet Allah are indeed the losers so much so that when that Hour comes to them suddenly they will say: 'Alas for us, how negligent we have been in this behalf .' They will carry their burden (of sins) on their backs. How evil is the burden they bear!

وَ مَا الۡحَیٰوۃُ الدُّنۡیَاۤ اِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَّ لَہۡوٌ ؕ وَ لَلدَّارُ الۡاٰخِرَۃُ خَیۡرٌ لِّلَّذِیۡنَ یَتَّقُوۡنَ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعۡقِلُوۡنَ ﴿۳۲﴾

(6:32) The life of this world is nothing but a sport and a pastime, (20) and the life of the Hereafter is far better for those who seek to ward off their ruin. Will you not, then, understand?

(20) This does not mean that earthly life has nothing serious about it and that it has been brought into being merely as a sport and pastime. What this observation means is that, compared with the true and abiding life of the Hereafter, earthly life seems, as it were, a sport, a transient pastime with which to amuse oneself before turning to serious business.

Earthly life has been likened to a sport and pastime for another reason as well. Since Ultimate Reality is hidden in this world, the superficially minded ones who lack true perception encounter many a thing which causes them to fall a prey to misconceptions. As a result of these misconceptions such persons indulge in a variety of actions which are so blatantly opposed to reality that their life seems to consist merely of sport and pastime. One who assumes the position of a king in this world, for instance, is no different from the person who plays the part of a king on the stage of a theatre. His head is bedecked with a crown and he goes about commanding people as if he were a king, even though he has no royal authority. He may later, if the director of the theatre wishes, be either dismissed from his royal office, put into prison or even be sentenced to death Plays of this kind go on all over the world. Saints and man-made deities are deemed to respond to human supplications even though they do not have a shred of authority to do so. Again, some people try to unravel the Unseen even though to do so lies altogether beyond their reach. There are those who claim to provide sustenance to others despite the fact that they are themselves dependent on others for their own sustenance. There are still others who think that they have the power either to bestow honour and dignity on human beings or to degrade them, either to confer benefits or to harm them. Such people go about trumpeting their own glory but their own foreheads bear the stamp of their humble bondage to their

Creator. By just one twist of fortune such people may fall of their pedestrals and be trampled under the feet of those upon whom they have been imposing their God-like authority.

> All these people come to a sudden end with death. As soon as man crosses the boundaries of this world and steps into the Next, the reality will be fully manifest, all the misconceptions that he has entertained will be peeled away, and he will be shown the true worth of his belief and actions.

قَدۡ نَعۡلَمُ اِنَّهٗ لَيَحۡزُنُكَ الَّذِىۡ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ فَاِنَّهُمۡ لَا يُكَذِّبُوۡنَكَ وَلٰكِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ يَجۡحَدُوۡنَ ﴿۳۳﴾

(6:33) (O Muhammad!) We know indeed that the things they say grieve you, though in truth it is not you whom they give the lie to, but it is the signs of Allah that these wrong-doers reject [(21)].

(21) The fact is that before the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) began to preach the message of God, all his people regarded him as truthful and trustworthy and had full confidence in his veracity. Only after he had begun to preach the message of God did they call him a liar. Even during this period none dared to say that the Prophet (peace be on him) had ever been guilty of untruthfulness in personal matters. Even his worst enemies never accused him of lying in any worldly affairs. When they did accuse him of falsehood, they did so in respect of his prophetic mission. Abu Jahl for instance, was one of his staunchest enemies. According to a tradition from 'Ali, Abu Jahl once said to the Prophet (peace be on him): 'We do not disbelieve you. We disbelieve your message.' On the occasion of the Battle of Badr, Akhnas b. Shariq asked Abu Jahl, when they were alone, to confide whether he considered Muhammad to be truthful or not. He replied: ' By God, Muhammad is a veracious person. He has never lied in all his life. But if every honorable office-liwa' (standard-bearing in war), siqayah (provision of water to the pilgrims), hijabah (gaurdian ship of the Kabah) and nubuwah (prophethood) - were to fall to the share of the decendents of

Qusayy, what would be left for the rest of the Quraysh?' (Ibn Kathir,vol.3, pp.17-18-Ed.)

Here God consoled the Prophet(peace be on him) by telling him that by charging him with falsehood the unbelievers were calling God untruthful. Since God has endured this accusation with mild forbearance, leaving them free to persist in their blasphemy, the Prophet (peace be on him) need not feel undue disquiet.

وَ لَقَدۡ كُذِّبَتۡ رُسُلٌ مِّنۡ قَبۡلِكَ فَصَبَرُوۡا عَلٰى مَا كُذِّبُوۡا وَ اُوۡذُوۡا حَتّٰۤى اَتٰىهُمۡ نَصۡرُنَا ۚ وَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَ لَقَدۡ جَآءَكَ مِنۡ نَّبَاِى الۡمُرۡسَلِيۡنَ ۟۳۴

(6:34) Messengers before you have been given the lie to, and they endured with patience their being given the lie to and being persecuted until the time when Our help reached them. None has the power to alter the words of Allah (22). Indeed some account of the Messengers has already reached you.

(22) The point emphasized here is that no one has the power to change God's Law regarding the conflict between Truth and falsehood. Lovers of Truth must of necessity pass through trials and persecution so as to be gradually tempered. Their endurance, their honesty of conviction, their readiness to sacrifice and to undertake all risk for their cause, the strength of their faith and the extent of their trust in God must be tested. They must pass through this phase of persecution to develop in themselves those qualities which can be developed nowhere else but on earth. They are also required to defeat the forces of ignorance by virtue of their moral excellence and the nobility of their character. Only after they have established their moral superiority over their adversaries will God's help arrive. No one can secure that help beforehand.

وَ اِنۡ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيۡكَ اِعۡرَاضُهُمۡ فَاِنِ اسۡتَطَعۡتَ اَنۡ تَبۡتَغِىَ نَفَقًا فِى الۡاَرۡضِ اَوۡ سُلَّمًا فِى السَّمَآءِ فَتَاۡتِيَهُمۡ بِاٰيَةٍ ؕ وَ لَوۡ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَمَعَهُمۡ عَلَى الۡهُدٰى فَلَا تَكُوۡنَنَّ مِنَ الۡجٰهِلِيۡنَ ۟۳۵

(6:35) Nevertheless, if their turning away grieves you, then seek - if you can - either a way down into the earth or a

ladder to the heavens, and try to bring to them some sign. (23) Had Allah so willed, He would have gathered them all to the true guidance. Do not, then, be among the ignorant. (24)

(23) The Prophet (peace be on him) saw that even though he had spent a long time admonishing his people, they did not seem inclined to heed his call. As a result he sometimes wished for the appearance of some extraordinary sign of God that would undermine the stubbornness of his people and lead them to accept his guidance. This verse embodies God's response to the Prophet's desire. He is told not to be impatient. He must persist in his striving and continue to work. in conformity with God's directive. Had it been God's purpose to work miracles, He would have done so. But God did not consider that to be either the appropriate method for bringing to a successful completion the required intellectual and moral revolution or for the evolution of a sound, healthy civilization. Well, then, if the Prophet (peace be on him) could not bear patiently with the attitude of stubbornness and rejection prevalent among his people, and if he thought it necessary to make them witness a tangible sign of God, let him muster all his strength and try to cleave the earth, or climb a ladder to the heaven and bring forth a miracle powerful enough to change the unbelief of the unbelievers into belief. He is told, however, that in this regard he should not expect God to fulfil his wish, for such things have no place in God's scheme.

(24) Had it been required that all people should be driven to the Truth, there would have been no need to send Prophets, to reveal heavenly Books, to direct believers to engage in struggles against unbelievers, and to make the message of Truth pass through the necessary stages until fulfilment is reached. The result could have been achieved by a single sign of God's creative will. God, however, did not want things to happen that way. He preferred the Truth to be set before people with its supporting arguments so that by a proper exercise of their rational judgement, they should recognize it for what it was and thereafter freely choose to embrace it as their faith. By molding their lives in conformity with this Truth such people should demonstrate their moral superiority over the devotees of falsehood. They should

continually attract men of sound morals by the force of their arguments, by the loftiness of their ideals, by the excellence of their principles and by the purity of their lives. They should thus reach their goal - the establishment of the hegemony of the true faith - by the natural and gradual escalation of strife against falsehood. God will guide them in the performance of this task and will provide them with whatever help they merit during the various stages of their struggle. But if anyone wishes to evade this natural course and wants God to obliterate corrupt ideas and to spread healthy ones in their stead, to root out a corrupt civilization and put a healthy one in its place by exercising His omnipotent will, let him know that this will not come about. The reason is that such is contrary to the scheme according to which God has created man as a responsible being, bestowed upon him a degree of power which he may exercise, granted him the freedom to choose between obedience and disobedience to God, awarded him a certain term of life in order to demonstrate his worth, and determined that at an appointed hour He will judge him for either reward or punishment in the light of his deeds.

اِنَّمَا يَسۡتَجِيۡبُ الَّذِيۡنَ يَسۡمَعُوۡنَ ؕ وَالۡمَوۡتٰى يَبۡعَثُهُمُ اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اِلَيۡهِ يُرۡجَعُوۡنَ ﴿۳۶﴾

(6:36) Only they who listen can respond to the call of the Truth; as for the dead, [25] Allah will raise them and then to Him they will be returned.

(25) 'Those who hear' refers to those whose consciences are alive, who have not atrophied their intellect and reason, and who have not closed their hearts to the Truth out of irrational prejudice and menta! inflexibility. In contrast to such people are those who are characterized as 'dead' - who blindly follow the old familiar beaten tracks, and can never deviate from the ways they have inherited, even when these ways are plainly at variance with the Truth.

وَقَالُوۡا لَوۡلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيۡهِ اٰيَةٌ مِّنۡ رَّبِّهٖ ؕ قُلۡ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَادِرٌ عَلٰۤى اَنۡ يُّنَزِّلَ اٰيَةً وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكۡثَرَهُمۡ لَا يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۳۷﴾

(6:37) And they say: 'Why has no miraculous sign been sent down to him from his Lord?' Say: 'Surely Allah has the power to send down a sign, but most of them do not know. (26)

(26) The word ayah here signifies a tangible miracle. The purpose of the verse is to point out that the reason for not showing a miraculous sign is not God's powerlessness. The true reason is something else which those people in their immaturity, have failed to comprehend.

وَ مَا مِنۡ دَآبَّۃٍ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ وَ لَا طٰٓئِرٍ یَّطِیۡرُ بِجَنَاحَیۡہِ اِلَّاۤ اُمَمٌ اَمۡثَالُکُمۡ ؕ مَا فَرَّطۡنَا فِی الۡکِتٰبِ مِنۡ شَیۡءٍ ثُمَّ اِلٰی رَبِّہِمۡ یُحۡشَرُوۡنَ ﴿۳۸﴾

(6:38) There is no animal that crawls on the earth, no bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book (of decree). Then to their Lord will they all be mustered.

وَ الَّذِیۡنَ کَذَّبُوۡا بِاٰیٰتِنَا صُمٌّ وَّ بُکۡمٌ فِی الظُّلُمٰتِ ؕ مَنۡ یَّشَاِ اللّٰہُ یُضۡلِلۡہُ ؕ وَ مَنۡ یَّشَاۡ یَجۡعَلۡہُ عَلٰی صِرَاطٍ مُّسۡتَقِیۡمٍ ﴿۳۹﴾

(6:39) Those who gave the lie to Our signs are deaf and dumb and blunder about in darkness. (27) Allah causes whomsoever He wills to stray in error, and sets whomsoever He wills on the straight way.' (28)

(27) If they are concerned with miraculous signs in order to determine whether or not the message of the Prophet (peace be on him) is indeed true, then, let them look around with open and attentive eyes. If they actually do so they will find the world full of such signs. Let them take any species of animal or bird they like. They can reflect upon the superbness of its organic structure. They will notice how its instinctive urges are in complete conformity with its natural requirements. They will also observe how wonderfully adequate are the arrangements for providing it with nourishment; how marvelously well-determined are the limits within which -it lives; how tremendously efficient is the system under which each living creature is protected, provided for, looked after and directed towards self-fulfillment; how strictly

each one is fitted into the framework of the discipline devised for it, and how very smooth is the operation of the whole system of birth, procreation and death. Were one to reflect on this alone from among the innumerable signs of God, one would perceive fully how true the teaching of the Prophet (peace he on him) is concerning the unity and other attributes of God and how necessary it is to live a righteous life in conformity with the concept of God propounded by him. But their eyes were neither open to perceive the Truth nor their ears open to heed admonition. Instead, they remained ignorant, preferring to be entertained by the performance of wondrous feats.

28. God's act of misguiding a man consists in not enabling one who cherishes his ignorance to observe the signs of God. The fact is that if a biased person - one who has no real love of the Truth - were to observe the signs of God, he might still fail to perceive it. Indeed, all those things which cause misconception and confusion would probably continue to alienate him from it. God's act of true guidance consists in enabling a seeker after the Truth to benefit from the sources of true knowledge, so that he constantly discovers sign after sign, leading him ultimately to the Truth.

A myriad of cases are encountered daily to illustrate this. We notice that a great many people pass inattentively over the countless signs of God that are scattered all over the world, and ignore even those signs which are manifest in human beings as well as in animals. It is little wonder, then, that they derive no lesson from all these signs. There are many who study zoology, botany, biology, geology, astronomy, physiology, anatomy and other branches of natural science. Others study history, archaeology and sociology. During the course of such studies they come across many signs of God which, if they cared to look at them in the correct perspective, might fill their hearts with faith. But since they commence their study with a bias, and are actuated only by the desire to acquire earthly advantages, they fail to discover the signs which could lead them to the Truth. On the contrary, each of those very signs of God contributes to pushing them towards atheism, materialism and naturalism. At the same time, the world is not empty of those truly wise ones

who view the universe with open eyes. For them even the most ordinary phenomenon of the universe directs them to God.

قُلۡ اَرَءَيۡتَكُمۡ اِنۡ اَتٰىكُمۡ عَذَابُ اللّٰهِ اَوۡ اَتَتۡكُمُ السَّاعَةُ اَغَيۡرَ اللّٰهِ تَدۡعُوۡنَ اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ صٰدِقِيۡنَ ۴۰

(6:40) Say: 'What do you think if some chastisement of Allah or the Hour suddenly overtakes you: do you cry to any other than Allah? Answer, if you speak the truth.

بَلۡ اِيَّاهُ تَدۡعُوۡنَ فَيَكۡشِفُ مَا تَدۡعُوۡنَ اِلَيۡهِ اِنۡ شَآءَ وَتَنۡسَوۡنَ مَا تُشۡرِكُوۡنَ ۴۱

(6:41) Lo, it is to Him alone that you cry and then, if He so wills, He removes the distress for which you had cried to Him. Then you forget the partners you had set up with Allah. (29)

(29) Attention is now drawn towards another sign - one observable even in the lives of those who deny the Truth. When either some great calamity befalls a man or when death starkly stares him in the face, it is only to God that he turns for refuge. On such occasions even the staunchest polytheists forget their false gods and cry out to the One True God, and even the most rabid atheists stretch out their hands in prayer to Him. This phenomenon is mentioned here in order to draw an instructive lesson. It shows that devotion to God and monotheism are ingrained in the human soul. No matter how overlaid this truth might be, some day it shakes off man's heedlessness and ignorance and manifests itself fully. It was the observation of this sign which had led 'Ikrimah, the son of Abu Jahl, to the true faith. For when Makka was conquered at the hands of the Prophet (peace be on him), 'Ikrimah fled to Jeddah and sailed from there towards Abyssinia. During the voyage the boat ran into a severe storm which threatened to capsize it. At first people began calling on their gods and goddesses. Later on, when the storm grew even worse and the passengers were sure that the boat would sink, they began to feel it was time to call on God alone, for He alone could save them. This opened the eyes of 'Ikrimah, whose heart cried out to him that if there was no effective helper for them in that situation, how could there he one elsewhere? He also

recalled that this was precisely what the Prophet (peace be on him) had constantly told people, and that it was precisely because of this preaching that they had been engaged in unnecessary violent conflict with him. This was a turning-point in 'Ikrimah's life. He instantly made up his mind that if he survived the storm he would go straight to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and place his hand in his, binding himself in allegiance. Thereafter he not only remained true to his word by becoming a Muslim, but spent the rest of his life struggling in the cause of Islam.

وَ لَقَ ۡ لَ سۡنَا اِلٰ ی اُمَمٍ مِّ ۡ قَ ۡ لِکَ فَاَخَذۡنٰ ہُم بِالۡبَ ۡ سَآءِ وَ الضَّرَّآءِ لَعَلَّ ہُمۡ یَتَضَرَّعُوۡنَ ۴۲

(6:42) And We did indeed send Messengers to other nations before you and then We seized those nations with misfortune and hardship so that they might humble themselves (before Us).

فَلَوۡ لَاۤ اِ ۡ جَآءَہُم بَ ۡ سُنَا تَضَرَّعُوۡ ا وَ لٰکِ ۡ قَسَتۡ قُلُوۡبُہُم وَ زَیَّنَ لَ ہُمُ الشَّ ۡ طٰنُ مَا کَانُوۡا یَ ۡ مَلُوۡنَ ۴۳

(6:43) But when misfortune befell them from Us why did they not humble themselves? Their hearts had hardened and Satan had made their deeds seem fair to them.

فَلَمَّا نَسُوۡ ا مَا ذُکِّرُوۡ ا بِ ۡ فَتَحۡنَا عَلَیۡہِم اَبۡ ۡ وَابَ کُلِّ شَ ۡ ءٍ ؕ حَتّٰ ۤ ی اِذَا فَرِحُوۡ ا بِمَاۤ اُوۡ ۡ اُوۡ ۡ اَخَذۡنٰ ہُم بَغۡتَۃً فَاِذَا ہُم مُّبۡلِسُوۡنَ ۴۴

(6:44) So, when they forgot what they had been reminded of, We opened the gates of all things so that while they rejoiced in what they had been granted We seized them suddenly and they were plunged into utter despair.

فَقُطِعَ دَابِرُ الۡ ۡ قَ ۡ مِ الَّذِ ۡ نَ ظَلَمُوۡ ا ؕ وَ الۡ ۡ حَمۡدُ لِلّٰہِ رَبِّ الۡ ۡ عٰلَمِیۡنَ ۴۵

(6:45) Thus the last remnant of those wrongdoing people was cut off. All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the entire universe, (for having punished them so).

قُلۡ اَرَءَيۡتُمۡ اِنۡ اَخَذَ اللّٰهُ سَمۡعَكُمۡ وَاَبۡصَارَكُمۡ وَخَتَمَ عَلٰى قُلُوۡبِكُمۡ مَّنۡ اِلٰهٌ غَيۡرُ اللّٰهِ يَاۡتِيۡكُمۡ بِهٖ ؕ اُنۡظُرۡ كَيۡفَ نُصَرِّفُ الۡاٰيٰتِ ثُمَّ هُمۡ يَصۡدِفُوۡنَ ۴۶

(6:46) Say (O Muhammad!): What do you think? If Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and seal your hearts (30) - who is the god, other than Allah, who could restore them to you? Behold, how We put forth Our signs in diverse forms, and yet they turn away from them.

(30) "... and set a seal upon your hearts" means" ...deprive you of the powers of thinking and understanding.

قُلۡ اَرَءَيۡتَكُمۡ اِنۡ اَتٰىكُمۡ عَذَابُ اللّٰهِ بَغۡتَةً اَوۡ جَهۡرَةً هَلۡ يُهۡلَكُ اِلَّا الۡقَوۡمُ الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ ۴۷

(6:47) Say: 'If the chastisement of Allah were to overtake you unawares or openly shall any except the wrong-doing people be destroyed?'

وَمَا نُرۡسِلُ الۡمُرۡسَلِيۡنَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرِيۡنَ وَمُنۡذِرِيۡنَ ۚ فَمَنۡ اٰمَنَ وَاَصۡلَحَ فَلَا خَوۡفٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَلَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُوۡنَ ۴۸

(6:48) We do not send Messengers except as bearers of glad tidings and warners. So, he who believes in their message and mends his conduct need have no fear and need not grieve;

وَالَّذِيۡنَ كَذَّبُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَمَسُّهُمُ الۡعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَفۡسُقُوۡنَ ۴۹

(6:49) whereas those who give the lie to Our signs, chastisement will visit them for their transgression.

قُلۡ لَّاۤ اَقُوۡلُ لَكُمۡ عِنۡدِىۡ خَزَآئِنُ اللّٰهِ وَلَاۤ اَعۡلَمُ الۡغَيۡبَ وَلَاۤ اَقُوۡلُ لَكُمۡ اِنِّىۡ مَلَكٌ ۚ اِنۡ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا يُوۡحٰۤى اِلَىَّ ؕ قُلۡ هَلۡ يَسۡتَوِى الۡاَعۡمٰى وَالۡبَصِيۡرُ ؕ اَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُوۡنَ ۵۰

(6:50) (O Muhammad!) Say: 'I do not say to you I have the treasures of Allah. Nor do I have knowledge of what is beyond the reach of human perception. Nor do I say to you: I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me.' (31) Then ask them: 'Are the blind and the seeing alike?' (32) Do you not then reflect?

(31) Feeble-minded people have always entertained the foolish misconception that the more godly a man is, the more liberated he should be from the limitations of human nature. They expect a godly person to be able to work wonders. By a mere sign of his hand, whole mountains should be transmuted into gold. At his command, the earth should begin to throw up all its hidden treasures. He should have miraculous access to all relevant facts about people. He should be able to point out the locations of things which have been lost, and show how they can be retrieved. He should be able to predict whether or not a patient will survive his disease; whether a pregnant woman will deliver a boy or a girl. Moreover, he should be above all human disabilities and limitations. How can a genuinely godly person feel hunger or thirst? How can he be overcome by sleep? How can he have a wife and children? How can he engage in buying and selling to meet his material requirements? How can he be impelled by force of circumstances to resort to such mundane acts as making money? How can he feel the pinch of poverty and paucity of resources? False conceptions such as these dominated the minds of the contemporaries of the Prophet (peace be on him). When they heard of his claim, in order to test his veracity they asked him regarding things that lie beyond the ken of human perception and to work wonders, and blamed him when they saw him engaged in such acts as eating and drinking, and taking care of his wife and children, and walking about the bazaars like other ordinary human beings. It is misconceptions such as these that this verse seeks to remove.

(32) The statement of a Prophet in such matters amounts to a testimony based on first-hand observation. For the truths which a Prophet propounds are those which he himself has observed and experienced and which have been brought within the range of his knowledge by means of revelation. On the contrary, those who are opposed to the truths propounded by the Prophets are blind since the notions they entertain are based either on guess-work and conjecture or on blind adherence to ideas hallowed by time. Thus the difference between a Prophet and his opponents is as that between a man who has sound vision and a man who is blind. Obviously the former is superior, by dint of this gift of

knowledge from God rather than because he has access to hidden treasures, because of his knowledge of the unseen world, and because of his freedom from physical limitations.

وَ اَنۡذِرۡ بِهِ الَّذِيۡنَ يَخَافُوۡنَ اَنۡ يُّحۡشَرُوۡۤا اِلٰى رَبِّهِمۡ لَيۡسَ لَهُمۡ مِّنۡ دُوۡنِهٖ وَلِىٌّ وَّلَا شَفِيۡعٌ لَّعَلَّهُمۡ يَتَّقُوۡنَ ۵۱

(6:51) And warn with this (revealed message) those who fear that they shall be mustered to their Lord, that there will be none apart from Allah to act as their protector and intercessor; then maybe they will become God-fearing. (33)

(33) Those who are too deeply immersed in the allurements of earthly life to think either of death or of their being brought to stand before God for His judgement can hardly benefit from such admonitions. Likewise, such admonitions can have no wholesome effect on those who cherish the illusion that because of their attachment to some holy personage who will intercede on their behalf, they will come to no harm in the Hereafter. The same applies to those who believe that someone has already obtained their redemption by expiating their sins. The Prophet (peace be on him) is therefore asked to disregard such persons and to attend to those who are conscious, those with no false illusions. Only these people are susceptible to admonitions and can be expected to reform themselves.

وَ لَا تَطۡرُدِ الَّذِيۡنَ يَدۡعُوۡنَ رَبَّهُمۡ بِالۡغَدٰوةِ وَ الۡعَشِىِّ يُرِيۡدُوۡنَ وَجۡهَهٗ ؕ مَا عَلَيۡكَ مِنۡ حِسَابِهِمۡ مِّنۡ شَىۡءٍ وَّ مَا مِنۡ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ مِّنۡ شَىۡءٍ فَتَطۡرُدَهُمۡ فَتَكُوۡنَ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ ۵۲

(6:52) And do not drive away those who invoke their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His pleasure all the time. (34) You are by no means accountable for them just as they are by no means accountable for you. If you still drive them away, you will become among the wrong-doers. (35)

(34) One of the objections raised by the chiefs and the affluent members of the Quraysh was that the Prophet (peace be on him) had gathered around him a host of slaves, clients (mawali) and others belonging to the lower strata of society. They used to scoff at the fact that men of such humble social standing as Bilal, 'Ammar. Suhayb and Khabbab had joined his ranks. They wondered if they happened to be the only chosen ones of the Quraysh in the sight of God! They not only poked fun at the

financial distress of these people but also attacked them for any weakness of character they had before accepting Islam. They went about saying sarcastically that those who had been such and such in the past had now become part of the 'chosen' community.

(35) That is, everyone is personally responsible for his deeds, whether good or bad. The Prophet (peace he on him) is told that he will neither have to explain to God the conduct of the converts nor will the latter be required to explain his conduct. They can neither usurp his good deeds, nor transfer their own misdeeds to his account. There is, therefore, no reason for the Prophet (peace be on him) to alienate those who approach him as seekers after Truth.

وَ كَذٰلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعۡضَهُمۡ بِبَعۡضٍ لِّيَقُوۡلُوۡۤا اَهٰۤؤُلَآءِ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ مِّنۡۢ بَيۡنِنَا ؕ اَلَيۡسَ اللّٰهُ بِاَعۡلَمَ بِالشّٰكِرِيۡنَ ﴿۵۳﴾

(6:53) Thus We have made some of them a means for testing others (36) so that they should say: 'Are these the ones among us upon whom Allah has bestowed His favor?' Yes, does Allah not know well who are the thankful ?

(36) By enabling the poor and the indigent, the people who have a low station in society to precede others in believing, God has put those who wax proud of wealth and honor to a severe test.

وَ اِذَا جَآءَكَ الَّذِيۡنَ يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَقُلۡ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيۡكُمۡ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمۡ عَلٰى نَفۡسِهِ الرَّحۡمَةَ ۙ اَنَّهٗ مَنۡ عَمِلَ مِنۡكُمۡ سُوۡٓءًا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِهٖ وَ اَصۡلَحَ فَاَنَّهٗ غَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ﴿۵۴﴾

(6:54) And when those who believe in Our signs come to you, say to them: 'Peace be upon you. Your Lord has made mercy incumbent upon Himself so that if anyone of you does a bad deed out of ignorance and thereafter repents and makes amends, surely you will find Him All-Forgiving, All Compassionate.' (37)

(37) Several of those who came to believe in the Prophet (peace be on him) had committed many serious sins before they embraced Islam. Even though their lives had altogether changed following their conversion, the opposition continued to play up the weaknesses and misdeeds of their past life. The Prophet (peace he on him) is asked to comfort such persons and to tell them that God does not punish those who sincerely repent their sins and mend their ways.

وَ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ ا لۡاٰيٰتِ وَ لِتَسۡتَبِيۡنَ سَبِيۡلُ يۡ مُجۡرِمِيۡنَ ٪ ۵۵

(6:55) Thus We clearly set forth Our signs so that the way of the wicked might become distinct. (38)

(38) 'And thus' refers to the whole of the foregoing discussion, beginning with (Verse 37): 'And they say: Why has no miraculous sign been sent down to him?' The purpose of this remark is to stress that the persistence of some people in their denial of the Truth and in their disbelief, in spite of a host of unmistakably clear signs and arguments, was sufficient to prove beyond doubt that they were merely a bunch of criminals. If they persisted in error and transgression it was neither through any lack of strong arguments in support of the Truth nor, conversely, because of strong arguments in support of falsehood. The reason was rather that they had deliberately chosen to fall into error and transgression.

قُلۡ اِنِّيۡ نُهِيۡتُ اَنۡ اَعۡبُدَ الَّذِيۡنَ تَدۡعُوۡنَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ قُلۡ لَّاۤ اَتَّبِعُ اَهۡوَآءَكُمۡ ۙ قَدۡ ضَلَلۡتُ اِذًا وَّ مَاۤ اَنَا مِنَ الۡمُهۡتَدِيۡنَ ۵۶

(6:56) Say (O Muhammad!): 'I have been forbidden to serve those to whom you call other than Allah.' Say: 'I do not follow your desires, for where I to do that, I would go astray and would not be of those who are rightly guided .'

قُلۡ اِنِّيۡ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنۡ رَّبِّيۡ وَ كَذَّبۡتُمۡ بِهٖ ؕ مَا عِنۡدِيۡ مَا تَسۡتَعۡجِلُوۡنَ بِهٖ ؕ اِنِ الۡحُكۡمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ؕ يَقُصُّ الۡحَقَّ وَ هُوَ خَيۡرُ الۡفٰصِلِيۡنَ ۵۷

(6:57) Say: 'I take stand upon a clear evidence from my Lord and it is that which you have given the lie to. That which you desire to be hastened is not within my power. (39) Judgement lies with Allah alone. He declares the Truth, and He is the best judge.'

(39) This alludes to God's punishment. The adversaries questioned why it was that they had openly rejected a Prophet sent by God, but had not been struck down by God's wrath? They said that the fact of his appointment by God meant that anyone who either disbelieved or insulted him would, at once, be either plunged into the earth or struck by lightning. And yet, they pointed out, the Messenger of God and his followers faced new sufferings and humiliations whereas those who abused and persecuted him enjoyed prosperity.

قُلْ اِنِّيْ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهٖ ۭ مَا عِنْدِيْ مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ بِهٖ ۭ اِنِ الْحُكْمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ۭ يَقُصُّ الْحَقَّ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفٰصِلِيْنَ ۝۵۷

(6:58) Say: 'If what you demand so hastily were in my power, the matter between me and you would have been long decided. But Allah knows best how to judge the wrong-doers.

قُلْ لَّوْ اَنَّ عِنْدِيْ مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ بِهٖ لَقُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِالظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝۵۸

(6:59) He has the keys to the realm that lies beyond the reach of human perception; none knows them but He. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea; there is not a leaf which falls that He does not know about and there is not a grain in the darkness of the earth or anything green or dry which has not been recorded in a Clear Book.

وَعِنْدَهٗ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَآ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۭ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَّرَقَةٍ اِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِيْ ظُلُمٰتِ الْاَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَّلَا يَابِسٍ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝۵۹

(6:60) He recalls your souls by night, and knows what you do by day; and then He raises you back each day in order that the

term appointed by Him is fulfilled. Then to Him you will return whereupon He will let you know what you have been doing.

وَ ۡوَ ۡلقَا ہِرُ فَوۡقَ عِبَادِہٖ وَ یُرۡسِلُ عَلَیۡکُمۡ حَفَظَۃً ؕ حَتّٰۤی اِذَا جَآءَ اَحَدَکُمُ الۡمَوۡتُ تَوَفَّتۡہُ رُسُلُنَا وَ ہُمۡ لَا یُفَرِّطُوۡنَ ۶۱

(6:61) And He alone holds sway over His servants and sets guardians over you (40) till death approaches any of you and Our deputed angels take his soul, neglecting no part of their task.

(40) The angels who keep watch and maintain a record of everything, i.e. all their movements, deeds and so on.

ثُمَّ رُدُّوۡۤا اِلَی اللّٰہِ مَوۡلٰىہُمُ الۡحَقِّ ؕ اَلَا لَہُ الۡحُکۡمُ وَ ہُوَ اَسۡرَعُ الۡحٰسِبِیۡنَ ۶۲

(6:62) Then all are restored to Allah, their true protector. Behold, His is the judgement. He is the swiftest of those who take account.'

قُلۡ مَنۡ یُّنَجِّیۡکُمۡ مِّنۡ ظُلُمٰتِ الۡبَرِّ وَ الۡبَحۡرِ تَدۡعُوۡنَہٗ تَضَرُّعًا وَّ خُفۡیَۃً ۚ لَئِنۡ اَنۡجٰىنَا مِنۡ ہٰذِہٖ لَنَکُوۡنَنَّ مِنَ الشّٰکِرِیۡنَ ۶۳

(6:63) Ask them (O Muhammad!): 'Who is it that delivers you from dangers in the deep darknesses of the land and the sea, and to whom do you call in humility and in the secrecy of your hearts? To whom do you pray: "If He will but save us from this distress, we shall most certainly be among the thankful?"

قُلِ اللّٰہُ یُنَجِّیۡکُمۡ مِّنۡہَا وَ مِنۡ کُلِّ کَرۡبٍ ثُمَّ اَنۡتُمۡ تُشۡرِکُوۡنَ ۶۴

(6:64) Say: "It is Allah alone Who delivers you from this and from every distress, and yet you associate others with Allah in His divinity." (41)

(41) That God alone possesses all power and authority, and has full control over the things which cause either benefit or harm to men, and that He alone holds the reins of their destiny are facts to which there is ample testimony in man's own being. For instance, whenever man is faced with a really hard time, and

when the resources upon which he normally fails back seem to fail him, he instinctively turns to God. In spite of such a clear sign, people set up partners to God without any shred of evidence that anyone other than God has any share in His power and authority.

قُلۡ هُوَ الۡقَادِرُ عَلٰۤى اَنۡ يَّبۡعَثَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ عَذَابًا مِّنۡ فَوۡقِكُمۡ اَوۡ مِنۡ تَحۡتِ اَرۡجُلِكُمۡ اَوۡ يَلۡبِسَكُمۡ شِيَعًا وَّيُذِيۡقَ بَعۡضَكُمۡ بَاۡسَ بَعۡضٍ ؕ اُنۡظُرۡ كَيۡفَ نُصَرِّفُ الۡاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَفۡقَهُوۡنَ ﴿۶۵﴾

(6:65) Say: "It is He Who has the power to send forth chastisement upon you from above you, or from beneath your feet, or split you into hostile groups and make some of you taste each other's violence. Behold, how We set forth Our signs in diverse forms, so that maybe they will understand the Truth". (42)

(42) God's punishment can strike in an instant. This is the warning to those who, supposing such punishment to the remote, were growing bolder in their hostility towards the Truth. They could be destroyed in a moment by a hurricane. Just a few earthquake tremors could raze villages and cities to the ground. Likewise, a few spark, of hostility could ultimately wreak such havoc among tribes. nations and countries that bloodshed and lawlessness plague them for years on end. Hence if they are spared punishments for a while that should not drug them to heedlessness and lead them to live in total disregard of distinctions between right and wrong. They should rather he grateful that God had given the respite and by means of a number of signs He was making it possible for them to recognize the Truth and follow it.

وَكَذَّبَ بِهٖ قَوۡمُكَ وَهُوَ الۡحَـقُّ ؕ قُلۡ لَّسۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ بِوَكِيۡلٍ ؕ ﴿۶۶﴾

(6:66) Your people have denied it even though it is the Truth. Say: "I am not a guardian over You. (43)

(43) A Prophet is neither required to compel People to see what they are not prepared to see nor to force into their hearts what they fail to comprehend. It is not a Prophet's task to chastise people for failing to see and comprehend the Truth. His task is merely to proclaim Truth as distinct from falsehood. If people fail

thereafter to accept it, they will be overwhelmed by the very misfortunes against which that Prophet had warned.

لِكُلِّ نَبَإٍ مُّسۡتَقَرٌّ وَّسَوۡفَ تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۶۷﴾

(6:67) Every tiding has its appointed time; you yourselves will soon know (the end)."

وَاِذَا رَاَيۡتَ الَّذِيۡنَ يَخُوۡضُوۡنَ فِىۡۤ اٰيٰتِنَا فَاَعۡرِضۡ عَنۡهُمۡ حَتّٰى يَخُوۡضُوۡا فِىۡ حَدِيۡثٍ غَيۡرِهٖ ؕ وَاِمَّا يُنۡسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيۡطٰنُ فَلَا تَقۡعُدۡ بَعۡدَ الذِّكۡرٰى مَعَ الۡقَوۡمِ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ ﴿۶۸﴾

(6:68) When you see those who are engaged in blasphemy against Our signs, turn away from them until they begin to talk of other things; and should Satan ever cause you to forget, (44) then do not remain, after recollection, in the company of those wrong-doing people.

(44) In case the Muslims fail to remember this directive and mistakenly continue to remain in the company of those who were indulging in making fun of their faith, they should withdraw from such company as soon as they remember this directive.

وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِيۡنَ يَتَّقُوۡنَ مِنۡ حِسَابِهِمۡ مِّنۡ شَىۡءٍ وَّلٰكِنۡ ذِكۡرٰى لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَتَّقُوۡنَ ﴿۶۹﴾

(6:69) For those who are God-fearing are by no means accountable for the others except that it is their duty to admonish them; maybe then, they will shun evil. (45)

(45) Those who avoid disobedience to God will not be held responsible for the errors of those who disobey. This being the case, the former have no justification for taking it upon themselves to persuade the latter to obedience or to consider themselves obliged to answer all their questions, however absurd and flimsy, until the Truth is forced down their throats. Their duty is merely to admonish and place the Truth before those whom they find stumbling about in error. If there is no response to this call except remonstration and obstinate argument they are under no obligation to waste their time and energy on them. They

should rather devote their time and energy to instructing and admonishing those who have an urge to seek out the Truth.

وَ ذَرِ الَّذِ نَ اتَّخَذُ ا دِي ۡ نُ لَعِبًا وَّ لَهۡوًا وَّ غَرَّ تۡهُمُ الۡحَيٰوةُ الدُّ يَا وَ ذَكِّرۡ بِهٖۤ اَنۡ تُبۡسَلَ نَفۡسٌ بِمَا
كَسَبَتۡ ۚ لَ يۡسَ لَهَا مِنۡ دُ وۡنِ اللّٰهِ وَلِىٌّ وَّ لَا شَفِ يۡعٌ ۚ وَ اِنۡ تَعۡدِلۡ كُلَّ عَدۡلٍ لَّا يُؤۡخَذۡ مِنۡهَا ؕ
اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِ يۡنَ اُبۡسِلُ ا بِمَا كَسَبُ ا ۚ لَهُمۡ شَرَابٌ مِّنۡ حَمِيۡمٍ وَّ عَذَابٌ اَلِيۡمٌ بِمَا كَانُوۡا
يَكۡفُرُوۡنَ ۷۰

(6:70) Leave alone those who have made a sport and a pastime of their religion and whom the life of the world has beguiled. But continue to admonish them (with the Quran) lest a man should be caught for what he has himself earned for there shall neither be any protector nor intercessor apart from Allah; and though he may offer any conceivable ransom it shall not be accepted from him, for such people have been caught for the deeds that they have themselves earned. Boiling water to drink and a painful chastisement to suffer for their unbelief is what awaits them.

قُلۡ اَنَدۡعُوۡا مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنۡفَعُنَا وَ لَا يَضُرُّنَا وَ نُرَدُّ عَلٰٓى اَعۡقَابِنَا بَعۡدَ اِذۡ هَدٰىنَا اللّٰهُ
كَالَّذِى اسۡتَهۡوَتۡهُ الشَّيٰطِيۡنُ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ حَيۡرَانَ لَهٗۤ اَصۡحٰبٌ يَّدۡعُوۡنَهٗۤ اِلَى الۡهُدَى ائۡتِنَا ؕ قُلۡ اِنَّ
هُدَى اللّٰهِ هُوَ الۡهُدٰى ؕ وَ اُمِرۡنَا لِنُسۡلِمَ لِرَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ۷۱

(6:71) Ask them (O Muhammad!): "Shall we invoke, apart from Allah, something that can neither benefit nor harm us, and thus be turned back on our heels after Allah has guided us? Like the one whom the evil ones have lured into bewilderment in the earth, even though he has friends who call him to true guidance saying: "Come to us." Say: "Surely Allah's guidance is the only true guidance, and we have been commanded to submit ourselves to the Lord of the entire universe,

وَ اَنۡ اَقِيۡمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اتَّقُوۡهُ ؕ وَ هُوَ الَّذِىۡۤ اِلَيۡهِ تُحۡشَرُوۡنَ ۷۲

(6:72) and to establish Prayer, and to have fear of Him. It is to Him that all of you shall be gathered.

وَ هُوَ الَّذِىۡ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضَ بِالۡحَقِّ ؕ وَ يَوۡمَ يَقُوۡلُ كُنۡ فَيَكُوۡنُ ۚ قَوۡلُهُ الۡحَقُّ ؕ وَ لَهُ
الۡمُلۡكُ يَوۡمَ يُنۡفَخُ فِى الصُّوۡرِ ؕ عٰلِمُ الۡغَيۡبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ ؕ وَ هُوَ الۡحَكِيۡمُ الۡخَبِيۡرُ ۷۳

(6:73) And He it is Who has created the heavens and the earth in truth; (46) and the very day He will say: "Be!" (resurrection) there will be. His word is the Truth and His will be the dominion (47) on the day when the-Trumpet is blown. (48) He knows all that lies beyond the reach of human perception as well as all that is visible to man; (49) He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware.'

(46) It has been asserted again and again in the Qur'an that God created the heavens and the earth 'in truth'. This covers a wide range of meanings:

First, that the heavens and the earth have not been created just for the fun of it. This existence is not a theatrical play. This world is not a child's toy with which to amuse oneself as long as one wishes before crushing it to bits and throwing it away. Creation is rather an act of great seriousness. A great objective motivates it, and a wise purpose underlies it. Hence, after the lapse of a certain stage it is necessary for the Creator to take full account of the work that has been done and to use those results as the basis for the next stage. This is stated at various places in the Qur'an in the following manner:

Our Lord, You did not create this in vain (Surah Al 'Imran 3:191).

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and whatever lies in between them playfully (Surah Al-Anbiya' 21:16).

And did you think that We created you out of play and that you will not be brought back to Us? (Surah al-Muminun 23:115).

Second, it means that God has created this entire system of the universe on solid foundations of truth. The whole of the universe is based on justice, wisdom and truth. Hence, there is no scope in the system for falsehood to take root and prosper. The phenomenon of the prosperity of falsehood which we observe, is to be ascribed to the will of God, Who grants the followers of falsehood the opportunity, if they so wish, to expend their efforts in promoting unrighteousness, injustice and untruth. In the end,

however, the earth will throw up all the seeds of untruth that have been sown, and in the final reckoning every follower of falsehood will see that the efforts he devoted to cultivating and watering this pernicious tree have all gone to waste.

Third, it means that God has founded the universe on the basis of right, and it is on the ground of being its Creator that He governs it. His command in the universe is supreme since He alone has the right to govern it, the universe being nothing but His creation. If anyone else's commands seem to be carried out in this world, this should not cause any misunderstanding. For in reality the will of no one prevails, and cannot prevail in the universe, for no one has any right to enforce his will.

(47) This does not mean that the present dominion is not His. The purpose of this statement is rather to stress that when the veil which keeps things covered during the present phase of existence is lifted and the Truth becomes fully manifest, it will become quite clear that all those who seemed or were considered to possess power and authority are absolutely powerless, and that the true dominion belongs to the One True God Who created the universe.

(48) In what manner the Trumpet will be blown is difficult for us to grasp. What we know through the Qur'an is that on the Day of Judgement the Trumpet will be blown on God's command, whereupon all will die. Then after an indefinite period of time - a period that is known to God alone - the second Trumpet will be blown, whereupon all people of all epochs will be resurrected and will find themselves on the Plane of the Congregation.

Thus, when the first Trumpet is blown the entire order of the universe will be disrupted, while on the blowing of the second Trumpet a fresh order will be established, in a new form and with a new set of laws governing it.

(49) Ghayb signifies all that is hidden from, and is beyond the ken of man's knowledge. Shahadah, as opposed to ghayb, signifies that which is manifest and thus can be known to man.

وَ اِذۡ قَالَ اِبۡرٰهِيۡمُ لِاَبِيۡهِ اٰزَرَ اَتَتَّخِذُ اَصۡنَامًا اٰلِهَةً ۚ اِنِّىۡۤ اَرٰٮكَ وَقَوۡمَكَ فِىۡ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيۡنٍ ۷۴

(6:74) And recall when Abraham said to his father, Azar: 'Do you take idols for gods? (50) I see you and your people in obvious error.'

(50) The incident relating to Abraham (peace be on him) is adduced in order to confirm and reinforce the view that just as Muhammad (peace he on him) and his Companions - thanks to the guidance vouchsafed by God - had denounced polytheism and had turned away from all false gods, bowing their heads in obedience to the One True Lord of the universe, so had been done by Abraham in his time. In the same way as ignorant people were then opposing the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and those who believed in him, Abraham, too, had been opposed in his day by the people among whom he lived. Furthermore, the answer Abraham gave to his people in the past can also be given by Muhammad (peace be on him) and his followers, for he was on the same path as Noah, Abraham and the other Prophets who had descended from Abraham. Those who had refused to follow the Prophet (peace be on him) should therefore take note that they had deviated from the way of the Prophets and were lost in error.

At this point it should also be noted that Abraham was generally acknowledged by the Arabs to be their patriarch and their original religious leader. The Quraysh, in particular, were proud of their devotion to Abraham, of being his progeny and of being servants to the shrine built by him. Hence, the mention of Abraham's doctrine of monotheism, of his denunciation of polytheism and his remonstration with his polytheistic people, amounted to demolishing the very basis on which the Quraysh had prided themselves. It also amounted to destroying the confidence of the people of Arabia in their polytheistic religion. This also proved to them that the Muslims stood in the shoes of Abraham himself, whereas their own position was that of an ignorant nation which had remonstrated with Abraham out of ignorance and folly.

وَ كَذٰلِكَ نُرِۤیۡۤ اِبۡرٰهِیۡمَ مَلَكُوۡتَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ وَ لِیَكُوۡنَ مِنَ الۡمُوۡقِنِیۡنَ ۝۷۵

(6:75) And thus We showed Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, (51) so that he might become one of those who have sure faith. (52)

(51) The adversaries are told that they can observe God's signs in the phenomena of the universe, just as Abraham could. The difference is that they see nothing, as if they were blind, whereas Abraham saw with open eyes. The sun, moon and stars which rise and set before their eyes day after day and night after night witness them as misguided at their setting as at their rising. Yet the same signs were observed by the perceptive Abraham, and the physical phenomena helped him arrive at the Truth.

(52) To obtain a full understanding of this section, as well as of those verses which mention the dispute between Abraham and his people, it is necessary to cast a glance at the religious and cultural condition of the latter. Thanks to recent archaeological discoveries, not only has the, city where Abraham is said to have been born been located, but a good deal of information is also available about the condition of the people of that area during the Abrahamic period. We reproduce below a summary of the conclusions which Sir Leonard Wooley arrived at as a result of the researches embodied in his work, Abraham (London, 1935).

It is estimated that around 2100 B.C., which is now generally accepted by scholars as the time of the advent of Abraham, the population of the city of Ur was at least two hundred and fifty thousand, maybe even five hundred thousand. The city was a large industrial and commercial metropolis. Merchandise was brought to Ur from places as far away as Palmir and Nilgiri in one direction, and in the other it had developed trade relations with Anatolia. The state, of which this city was the capital, extended a little beyond the boundaries of modern Iraq in the north, and exceeded its present borders further to the west. The great majority of the population were traders and craftsmen. The inscriptions of that period, which have been discovered in the course of archaeological research, make it clear that those people

had a purely materialistic outlook on life. Their greatest concern was to earn the maximum amount of wealth and enjoy the highest degree of comfort and luxury. Interest was rampant among them and their devotion to money-making seemed all-absorbing. They looked at one another with suspicion and often resorted to litigation. In their prayers to their gods, too, they generally asked for longer life, prosperity and greater commercial success, rather than for spiritual growth, God's pardon and reward in the Hereafter.

The population comprised three classes of people: (1) amelu, the priests, the government and military officers; (2) mushkinu, the craftsmen and farmers; and (3) the slaves. The people of the first class mentioned, i.e. amelu, enjoyed special privileges. In both criminal and civil matters, their rights were greater than those of the others, and their lives and property were deemed to be of higher value. It was in such a city and in such a society that Abraham first saw the light of day. Whatever information we possess with regard to him and his family through the Talmud shows that he belonged to the Amalu class and that his father was the highest functionary of the state. See also Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. 1, (Surah 2, n.290).

In the inscriptions of Ur there are references to about five thousand deities. Each city had its own deity. Each city had a chief deity which it considered its chief protector and, therefore, that deity was considered worthy of greater reverence than all the others. 'The chief deity of Ur was Nannar (the moon god), and it is for this reason that the city later became known as Kamarina. The other major city was Larsa, which replaced Ur as the capital of the kingdom. Its chief deity was Shamash (the sun god). Under these major deities there was a myriad of minor deities which had generally been chosen from among the heavenly bodies - stars and planets. People considered them responsible for granting their innumerable minor prayers. Idols had been carved in the image of these celestial and terrestrial gods and goddesses and were made objects of ritual worship.

Qamar is the Arabic word for 'moon'- Ed.

The idol of Nannar had been placed in a magnificent building on the top of the highest hill. Close to it was the temple of Nin-Gal, the wife of Nannar. The temple of Nannar resembled a royal palace. Every night a female worshipper went to its bedroom, adorned as a bride. A great number of women had been consecrated in the name of this deity and their position was virtually that of religious prostitutes. The woman who would sacrifice her virginity for the sake of her 'god' was held in great esteem. For a woman to give herself to some unrelated person 'for the sake of God' was considered a means to salvation. Needless to say, it was generally the priests who made most use of this institution. Nannar was not merely a deity, but the biggest landlord, the biggest trader, the biggest industrialist and the most powerful ruler. Many orchards, buildings and huge estates had been consecrated to his temple. In addition to this, cereals, milk, gold, cloth, etc., were brought as offerings to the temple by peasants, landlords and merchants, and there was a large staff in the temple to receive the offerings. Many a factory had been established on behalf of the temple. Large-scale trading was also carried out on its behalf. All these activities were conducted by the priests in the name of the deity. Moreover, the country's main court was also located in the temple. The priests functioned as judges and their judgements were equated with those of God. The authority of the royal family was derived from Nannar. The concept was that Nannar was the true sovereign and that the ruler of the country governed merely on his behalf. Because of this relationship, the king himself was raised to the rank of a deity and was worshipped.

The founder of the dynasty which ruled over Ur at the time of Abraham was Ur-Nammu. In 2300 B.C. he had established an extensive kingdom, stretching from Susa in the east to Lebanon in the west. Hence the dynasty acquired the name 'Nammu', which became Nimrud in Arabic. After the emigration of Abraham, both the ruling dynasty and the nation of Ur were subjected to a succession of disasters. Firstly, the Elamites sacked Ur and captured Nimrud along with the idols of Nannar. Later on, an Elamite state was established in Larsa which governed Ur as well.

Later still, Babylon prospered under a dynasty of Arabian origin and both Larsa and Ur came under its hegemony. These disasters shook the people of Ur's faith in Nannar, for he had failed to protect them.

It is difficult to say much, with certainty, about the extent of the subsequent impact of the teachings of Abraham on these people. The laws which were codified by the Babylonian King Hammurabi in 1910 B.C. show the impress of the prophetic influence, whether direct or indirect. An inscription of this code was discovered in 1902 by a French archaeologist and its English translation by C. H. W. John was published in 1903 under the title The Oldest Code of Law. Many articles of this code, both fundamental principles and substantive laws, bear some resemblance to the Mosaic Law.
If the conclusions of these archaeological researchers are correct, it becomes quite evident that polytheism did not consist merely of a set of religious beliefs and polytheistic rites, it rather provided the foundation on which the entire order of economic, cultural, political and social life rested. Likewise, the monotheistic mission which was undertaken by Abraham was not merely directed against the practice of idol-worship. It had far wider implications, so much so that it affected the position of the royal family both as rulers and deities. It also affected the social, economic and, political status and interests of the priestly class, and the aristocracy in general, and in fact the entire fabric of the social life of the kingdom. To accept the teaching of Abraham meant that the entire edifice of the existing society should be pulled down and raised anew on the basis of belief in the One God. Hence, as soon as Abraham launched his mission, ordinary people as well as the privileged classes, ordinary devotees as well as Nimrud. rose at once to oppose and suppress it.

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيۡهِ الَّيۡلُ رَاٰ كَوۡكَبًا قَالَ هٰذَا رَبِّىۡ فَلَمَّاۤ اَفَلَ قَالَ لَاۤ اُحِبُّ الۡاٰفِلِيۡنَ ۝٧٦

(6:76) Then, when the night outspread over him, he beheld a star, and said: 'This is my Lord.' But when it went down, he said: 'I do not love the things that go down.'

فَلَمَّا رَاَ الْقَمَرَ بَازِغًا قَالَ هٰذَا رَبِّيْ فَلَمَّآ اَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَهْدِنِيْ رَبِّيْ لَاَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّآلِّيْنَ ۝٧٧

(6:77) Then, when he beheld the moon rising, he said: 'This is my Lord!' But when it went down, he said: 'Were that my Lord did not guide me, I surely would have become among the people who have gone astray.'

فَلَمَّا رَاَ الشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هٰذَا رَبِّيْ هٰذَآ اَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّآ اَفَلَتْ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اِنِّيْ بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝٧٨

(6:78) Then when he beheld the sun rising, he said: 'This is my Lord. This is the greatest of all.' Then, when it went down, he said: 'O my people! Most certainly I am quit of those whom you associate with Allah in His divinity. (53)

(53) Here some light is thrown on the mental experience through which Abraham passed in the beginning and which led him to an understanding of the Truth before prophethood was bestowed on him. This experience shows how a right-thinking and sound-hearted man, who had opened his eyes in a purely polytheistic environment and had received no instruction in monotheism, was ultimately led to discover the Truth by careful observation of, and serious reflection on the phenomena of the universe. The account of the conditions prevailing among the people of Abraham shows that when he began to think seriously the scene was dominated by the worship of the heavenly bodies - the moon, the sun and the stars. It was natural, therefore, that when Abraham began his quest for the Truth, he should have been faced with the question: Is it possible that any of these - the sun, the moon and the stars - is God? He concentrated his reflection on this central question and by observing that all the gods of his nation were bound by a rigid law under which they moved about like slaves, he concluded that those so-called gods were not possessed of even a shadow of the power of the One True Lord, Who alone had created them all and had yoked them to serve His will.

The Qur'anic passage describing Abraham's reactions on

observing first a star, then the moon, and finally the sun, has puzzled some readers because the words seem to suggest that Abraham had never before witnessed these common phenomena. This misconception has made the whole narration such a riddle for some scholars that they could only solve it by inventing the strange anecdote that Abraham was born and grew to maturity in a cave and was thus deprived of the opportunity to observe the heavenly bodies. What is said, however, is so plain that one need not fall back on any such incident in order to comprehend it. It is well known, for instance, that when Newton saw an apple fall from a tree in his orchard this incident instantly raised in his mind the question: Why do things always fall to the ground? As a result of his reflection on this question he arrived at his theory of gravity. On reading this incident one might wonder if Newton had never before seen anything fall to the ground! Obviously, he must have seen things fall. For what reason, then, should the failing of an apple cause in his mind a reaction quite different from those caused by hundreds of earlier observations of similar things failing? The answer is that a reflecting mind does not react uniformly to similar observations. A man may observe something over and over again without this observation creating any stir in his mind, but then there comes a moment when suddenly the same observation agitates his mind and his mental faculty begins to work in a different direction. It may also happen that while a man's mind is wrestling with a problem, he encounters something which is otherwise quite ordinary but which suddenly seems to provide the key. Something to this effect happened with Abraham. Certainly, he was as familiar as anyone else with nightfall and the ensuing daybreak. The sun, the moon and the stars had all risen before his eyes in the past and had then disappeared from sight. But on one particular day his observation of a star was to stimulate his thinking in a certain direction and to lead him in the end to perceive the truth of God's Oneness. It is possible that Abraham's mind was already engrossed in reflecting on whether, and if so to what extent, the beliefs which served as the foundation of the entire life-system of his people embodied the Truth. when he spotted a star which provided him with the initial key to the solution of the problem. It is also possible that

the observation of a particular star first set him thinking about the problem.

Another question that arises is whether Abraham's statements about the star, the moon and the sun show that he lapsed into polytheism temporarily. The answer must be that, while a seeker after the Truth may pause on the way to his goal, what really matters is his direction and the end-point of his journey rather than the intermediary stages. These stages are inevitable for every seeker of the Truth. A man stops at them to inquire and question rather than to pronounce his final judgement. During these stages of the quest a man may seem to express the opinion: 'That is so', but what he is really doing is asking himself the question: 'Is it really so?' When serious investigation leads to a negative answer, he proceeds further and continues the quest. Hence, it would be wrong to think of such a seeker having temporarily fallen victim to polytheism and unbelief whenever he paused at an intermediary stage for critical reflection.

اِنِّیۡ وَجَّہۡتُ وَجۡہِیَ لِلَّذِیۡ فَطَرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضَ حَنِیۡفًا وَّمَاۤ اَنَا مِنَ الۡمُشۡرِکِیۡنَ ﴿۷۹﴾

(6:79) Behold, I have turned my face in exclusive devotion to the One Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am certainly not one of those who associate others with Allah in His divinity.'

وَحَآجَّہٗ قَوۡمُہٗ ؕ قَالَ اَتُحَآجُّوۡٓنِّیۡ فِی اللّٰہِ وَقَدۡ ہَدٰىنِ ؕ وَلَاۤ اَخَافُ مَا تُشۡرِکُوۡنَ بِہٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ یَّشَآءَ رَبِّیۡ شَیۡئًا ؕ وَسِعَ رَبِّیۡ کُلَّ شَیۡءٍ عِلۡمًا ؕ اَفَلَا تَتَذَکَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۸۰﴾

(6:80) His. people remonstrated with him whereupon Abraham said: 'Do you remonstrate with me concerning Allah Who has guided me to the right way? I do not fear those whom you associate with Allah in His divinity. Only that which my Lord wills, indeed that alone will come by. My Lord embraces all things within His knowledge. Will you not take heed? (54)

(54) The word used here is tadhakkur which conveys the sense that somebody who had been either heedless or negligent of something suddenly wakes up to its true meaning. The purpose of Abraham's statement was to recall them to their senses by reminding them that their true Lord was not uninformed about their deeds, for His knowledge encompasses everything.

وَكَيۡفَ اَخَافُ مَۤا اَشۡرَكۡتُمۡ وَلَا تَخَافُوۡنَ اَنَّكُمۡ اَشۡرَكۡتُمۡ بِاللّٰهِ مَا لَمۡ يُنَزِّلۡ عَلَيۡكُمۡ سُلۡطٰنًا ؕ فَاَىُّ الۡفَرِيۡقَيۡنِ اَحَقُّ بِالۡاَمۡنِ ۚ اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ۝٨١

(6:81) Why should I fear those whom you have associated (with Allah in His divinity) when you do not fear associating others with Allah in His divinity - something for which He has sent down to you no authority. Then, which of the two parties has better title to security? Tell us, if you have any knowledge!

اَلَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَلَمۡ يَلۡبِسُوۡۤا اِيۡمَانَهُمۡ بِظُلۡمٍ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ الۡاَمۡنُ وَهُمۡ مُّهۡتَدُوۡنَ ۝٨٢

(6:82) Those who believe and did not tarnish their faith with wrong-doing for them there is security, and it is they who have been guided to the right way.' (55)

(55) This entire section shows that those people did not deny the existence of God as the creator of the heavens and earth. Their real guilt was that they associated others in His attributes and His rights over man. In the first place, Abraham himself clearly states that they associated others with God as His partners. In the second place, the way in which Abraham mentions God in addressing these people is suitable only for a people who did not deny the existence of God. We must, therefore, regard as incorrect the opinion of those Qur'anic commentators who try to explain this verse on the assumption that the people of Abraham either denied or were unaware of the existence of God, and considered their own deities to be the exclusive possessors of godhead.

The expression 'and did not tarnish their faith with wrong-doing' led some Companions to the misapprehension that perhaps this 'wrong-doing' signified 'disobedience'. But the Prophet (peace

be on him) has made it clear that this wrong-doing signifies shirk (associating others with God in His divinity). The verse means, therefore, that they alone are fully secure and rightly-guided who believe in God and do not mix their faith with any polytheistic belief and practice.

It is interesting to learn that this incident, which is the starting-point of Abraham's prophetic career, has found no place in the Bible. It is mentioned only in the Talmud. The Talmudic version, however, is different from the Qur'anic version in two ways. First, in the Talmudic version Abraham's quest for the Truth begins with the sun and then proceeds by way of the stars to his discovery of the One True God. Second. it states that Abraham not only held the sun to be his Lord but even worshipped it, and that the same happened in connection with the moon.

وَ تِلۡکَ حُجَّتُنَاۤ اٰتَیۡنٰۤہَاۤ اِبۡرٰہِیۡمَ عَلٰی قَوۡمِہٖ ؕ نَرۡفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنۡ نَّشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ حَکِیۡمٌ عَلِیۡمٌ ﴿۸۳﴾

(6:83) That was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people. We raise in ranks whom We will. Truly your lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing.

وَ وَہَبۡنَا لَہٗۤ اِسۡحٰقَ وَ یَعۡقُوۡبَ ؕ کُلًّا ہَدَیۡنَا ۚ وَ نُوۡحًا ہَدَیۡنَا مِنۡ قَبۡلُ ۚ وَ مِنۡ ذُرِّیَّتِہٖ دَاوٗدَ وَ سُلَیۡمٰنَ وَ اَیُّوۡبَ وَ یُوۡسُفَ وَ مُوۡسٰی وَ ہٰرُوۡنَ ؕ وَ کَذٰلِکَ نَجۡزِی الۡمُحۡسِنِیۡنَ ﴿۸۴﴾

(6:84) And We bestowed upon Abraham (offspring) Ishaq (Isaac) and Ya'qub (Jacob) and each of them did We guide to the right way as We had earlier guided Noah to the right way; and (of his descendants We guided) Da'ud (David) and Sulayman (Solomon), Ayyub (Job), Yusuf (Joseph), Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron). Thus do We reward those who do good.

وَ زَکَرِیَّا وَ یَحۡیٰی وَ عِیۡسٰی وَ اِلۡیَاسَ ؕ کُلٌّ مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِیۡنَ ﴿۸۵﴾

(6:85) (And of his descendants We guided) Zakariya (Zachariah), Yahya (John), Isa (Jesus) and Ilyas (Elias): each one of them was of the righteous.

وَ اِ سۡمٰعِيۡلَ وَ الۡيَسَعَ وَ يُوۡنُسَ وَ لُوۡطًا ؕ وَ كُلًّا فَضَّلۡنَا عَلَى الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۸۶﴾

(6:86) (And of his descendants We guided) Isma'il (Ishmael), al-Yasa' (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), and Lut (Lot). And each one of them We favored over all mankind.

وَ مِنۡ اٰبَآئِهِمۡ وَ ذُرِّيّٰتِهِمۡ وَ اِخۡوَانِهِمۡ ۚ وَ اجۡتَبَيۡنٰهُمۡ وَ هَدَيۡنٰهُمۡ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسۡتَقِيۡمٍ ؕ﴿۸۷﴾

(6:87) And likewise We elected for Our cause and guided on to a straight way some of their forefathers and their offspring and their brethren.

ذٰلِكَ هُدَى اللّٰهِ يَهۡدِىۡ بِهٖ مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهٖ ؕ وَ لَوۡ اَشۡرَكُوۡا لَحَبِطَ عَنۡهُمۡ مَّا كَانُوۡا يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ؕ﴿۸۸﴾

(6:88) That is Allah's guidance wherewith He guides those of His servants whom He wills. But if they ever associated others with Allah in His divinity, then all that they had done would have gone to waste. (56)

(56) Had those people also ascribed partners to God like the people of Arabia, they would not have achieved the positions they had attained. Some might perhaps have earned places in the rogues' gallery of history as either ruthless conquerors or monuments to greed. But had they not shunned polytheism and adhered to their exclusive and unadulterated devotion to God, they would certainly neither have had the honor of becoming the source of light and guidance to others nor of assuming the leadership of the pious and the God-fearing.

اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰتَيۡنٰهُمُ الۡكِتٰبَ وَ الۡحُكۡمَ وَ النُّبُوَّةَ ۚ فَاِنۡ يَّكۡفُرۡ بِهَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ فَقَدۡ وَكَّلۡنَا بِهَا قَوۡمًا لَّيۡسُوۡا بِهَا بِكٰفِرِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۸۹﴾

(6:89) Those are the ones to whom We gave the Book, and judgement and prophethood. (57) And if they refuse to believe in it now, We will bestow this favor on a people who do believe in it. (58)

(57) Here the Prophets are mentioned as having been endowed with three things: first, the revealed guidance embodied in the Book; second, hukm, i.e. the correct understanding of the revealed guidance, the ability to apply its principles to the practical affairs of life, the God-given capacity to arrive at right opinions regarding human problems; and third, prophethood, the office by virtue of which they are enabled to lead human beings in the light of the guidance vouchsafed to them.

(58) God does not care if the unbelievers and polytheists choose to reject the guidance which has come down from Him, for He had already raised a sizeable group of men of faith to truly appreciate its worth.

أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيۡنَ هَدَى اللّٰهُ فَبِهُدٰىهُمُ اقۡتَدِهۡ‌ؕ قُلۡ لَّاۤ اَسۡـَٔـلُكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ اَجۡرًا‌ؕ اِنۡ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكۡرٰى لِلۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ۝٩٠

(6:90) (O Muhammad!) Those are the ones Allah guided to the right way. Follow, then, their way, and say: 'I ask of you no reward (for carrying on this mission); it is merely an admonition to all mankind.'

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدۡرِهٖۤ اِذۡ قَالُوۡا مَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى بَشَرٍ مِّنۡ شَىۡءٍ‌ؕ قُلۡ مَنۡ اَنۡزَلَ الۡكِتٰبَ الَّذِىۡ جَآءَ بِهٖ مُوۡسٰى نُوۡرًا وَّهُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ تَجۡعَلُوۡنَهٗ قَرَاطِيۡسَ تُبۡدُوۡنَهَا وَتُخۡفُوۡنَ كَثِيۡرًا‌ۚ وَعُلِّمۡتُمۡ مَّا لَمۡ تَعۡلَمُوۡۤا اَنۡتُمۡ وَلَاۤ اٰبَآؤُكُمۡ‌ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ‌ۙ ثُمَّ ذَرۡهُمۡ فِىۡ خَوۡضِهِمۡ يَلۡعَبُوۡنَ ۝٩١

(6:91) They did not form any proper estimate of Allah when they said: 'Allah has not revealed anything to any man.' (59) Ask them: 'The Book which Moses brought as a light and guidance for men and which you keep in bits and scraps, some of which you disclose while the rest you conceal, even though through it you were taught that which neither you nor your forefathers knew -who was it who revealed it?' (60) Say: 'Allah!'- and then leave them to sport with their argumentation.

(59) In the light of the foregoing discussion and commentary, it is quite evident that this statement comes from the Jews. Since the Prophet (peace be on him) had asserted that he was a

Prophet and that a Book had been revealed to him, the unbelieving Quraysh and other polytheists of Arabia naturally used to approach the Jews and the Christians - who believed in the Prophets and in the Scriptures - and tried to solicit a candid answer from them as to whether God's words had indeed been revealed to Muhammad (peace be on him). Whatever answer they gave was then disseminated on all sides by the active opponents of the Prophet (peace be on him) in order to create revulsion against Islam. This is the reason for mentioning, and then refuting, this statement by the Jews, which had been used by the opposition as an argument against Islam.

One might wonder how a Jew, who believes in the Torah as a revealed Book of God, could say that God had revealed nothing to anyone. At times blind obstinacy and bigotry cause people to resort to arguments which strike at the roots of their own belief. These people were bent upon denying the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be on him), and this fanaticism had come to dominate them so much that they went so far as to deny the very institution of prophethood.

To say that people have not formed any proper estimate of God means that they have erred grossly in assessing His wisdom and power. Whoever says that God did not reveal knowledge of Reality and the code for man's guidance has fallen into one of two errors. Either he considers it impossible for man to become the recipient of God's revelation, and this constitutes a gross misjudgment of God's power, or he thinks that even though God has equipped man with intelligence and with the power to act as he chooses, He has nevertheless made no arrangement for his guidance, but has left him in this world altogether unguided and thus conferred upon him the right to behave in any way he likes. This is obviously a misjudgment of God's wisdom.

(60) The revelation of the Torah to Moses (peace be on him) is adduced by way of evidence since the Jews, to whom this response is addressed, believed that it had been revealed. It is obvious that their recognition of the Torah as the Book revealed to Moses negated their standpoint that God had never revealed

anything to any human being. Their belief in the Torah at least proved that revelation to man is possible, and had actually taken place.

وَ هٰذَا كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مُبٰرَكٌ مُّصَدِّقُ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَ لِتُنْذِرَ اُمَّ الْقُرٰى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا ؕ وَ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ وَهُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ ۝۹۲

(6:92) (Like that Book) this too is a Book which We have revealed; full of blessing, confirming what was revealed before it so that you might warn the people of the Mother of Cities (Makka) and those around it. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and are ever mindful of their Prayers. (61)

(61) The point argued above was that God's word can be, and in the past has been, revealed to human beings. The next point is that the message of Muhammad (peace be on him) is indeed the revealed word of God. In order to establish this, four things are adduced as evidence: First, that this Book is overflowing with God's grace and beneficence. In other words, it contains the best possible principles for the well-being and salvation of mankind. It lays down the true doctrines of belief. It urges man to righteous conduct and inspires him to moral excellence. It contains guidance as to how one may live a life of purity. And above all, it is free from any trace of the ignorance, egocentricity, narrow-mindedness, iniquity, obscenity and other corruptions with which the Jews and the Christians had overlaid their revealed Scriptures. Second, this Book does not propound any guidance which is essentially divergent from that previously revealed; rather it confirms and supports it. Third, the purpose of the revelation of this Book is the same as that of the revelation of Scriptures in the past, viz., to shake people out of their heedlessness and warn them of the evil consequences of their corruption. Fourth, that the call of this Book did not attract those who merely worshipped worldly advantages and were slaves of their animal desires. On the contrary, it attracted those whose vision goes beyond the narrow limits of worldly life. Moreover, the revolution wrought in the lives of people under the influence of this Book has rendered them conspicuously distinct from others in respect of piety and

godliness.

A Book with such characteristics and with such a wholesome impact on human beings can only be from God.

وَمَنۡ اَظۡلَمُ مِمَّنِ افۡتَرٰی عَلَی اللّٰہِ کَذِبًا اَوۡ قَالَ اُوۡحِیَ اِلَیَّ وَلَمۡ یُوۡحَ اِلَیۡہِ شَیۡءٌ وَّ مَنۡ قَالَ سَاُنۡزِلُ مِثۡلَ مَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰہُ ؕ وَلَوۡ تَرٰۤی اِذِ الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ فِیۡ غَمَرٰتِ الۡمَوۡتِ وَالۡمَلٰٓئِکَۃُ بَاسِطُوۡۤا اَیۡدِیۡہِمۡ ۚ اَخۡرِجُوۡۤا اَنۡفُسَکُمۡ ؕ اَلۡیَوۡمَ تُجۡزَوۡنَ عَذَابَ الۡہُوۡنِ بِمَا کُنۡتُمۡ تَقُوۡلُوۡنَ عَلَی اللّٰہِ غَیۡرَ الۡحَقِّ وَکُنۡتُمۡ عَنۡ اٰیٰتِہٖ تَسۡتَکۡبِرُوۡنَ ﴿۹۳﴾

(6:93) Who can be more unjust than he who places a lie on Allah and who says: 'Revelation has come to me' when in fact nothing was revealed to him, and who says: 'I will produce the like of what Allah has revealed?' If you could but see the wrongdoers in the agonies of death, and the angels stretching out their hands (saying): 'Yield up your souls! Today you will be recompensed with the chastisement of humiliation for the lie you spoke concerning Allah, and for you waxing proud against His signs.'

وَلَقَدۡ جِئۡتُمُوۡنَا فُرَادٰی کَمَا خَلَقۡنٰکُمۡ اَوَّلَ مَرَّۃٍ وَّتَرَکۡتُمۡ مَّا خَوَّلۡنٰکُمۡ وَرَآءَ ظُہُوۡرِکُمۡ ۚ وَمَا نَرٰی مَعَکُمۡ شُفَعَآءَکُمُ الَّذِیۡنَ زَعَمۡتُمۡ اَنَّہُمۡ فِیۡکُمۡ شُرَکٰٓؤُا ؕ لَقَدۡ تَّقَطَّعَ بَیۡنَکُمۡ وَضَلَّ عَنۡکُمۡ مَّا کُنۡتُمۡ تَزۡعُمُوۡنَ ﴿۹۴﴾

(6:94) (And Allah will say): 'Now you have come to Us all alone even as We had created you in the first instance, and you have left behind all that We had bestowed upon you in the world. We do not see with you your intercessors whom you imagined to have a share with Allah in your affairs. You have now been cut off from one another and all those whom you imagined (to be Allah's associates in your affairs) have failed you.'

اِنَّ اللّٰہَ فَالِقُ الۡحَبِّ وَالنَّوٰی ؕ یُخۡرِجُ الۡحَیَّ مِنَ الۡمَیِّتِ وَمُخۡرِجُ الۡمَیِّتِ مِنَ الۡحَیِّ ؕ ذٰلِکُمُ اللّٰہُ ۚ فَاَنّٰی تُؤۡفَکُوۡنَ ﴿۹۵﴾

(6:95) Truly it is Allah Who causes the grain [62] and the fruit-kernel to sprout. He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living. [63] Such is Allah. So whither are you tending in error?

(62) The one who causes the seed-grain to split open under the surface of the earth and then makes it grow and appear on the surface as a plant is no other than God.

(63) To 'bring forth the living from the dead' means creating living beings out of dead matter. Likewise, 'to bring out the dead from the living' means to remove the lifeless elements from a living organism.

فَالِقُ الۡاِصۡبَاحِ ۚ وَ جَعَلَ الَّيۡلَ سَكَنًا وَّ الشَّمۡسَ وَ الۡ قَمَرَ بُسۡبَانًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ تَقۡدِيۡرُ الۡعَزِيۡزِ الۡعَلِيۡمِ ۹۶

(6:96) It is He Who causes the dawn to split forth, and has ordained the night for repose, and the sun and the moon for reckoning time. All this is determined by Allah the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

وَ هُوَ الَّذِىۡ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُوۡمَ لِتَهۡتَدُوۡا بِهَا فِىۡ ظُلُمٰتِ الۡبَرِّ وَ الۡبَحۡرِ ؕ قَدۡ فَصَّلۡنَا الۡاٰيٰتِ لِقَوۡمٍ يَّعۡلَمُوۡنَ ۹۷

(6:97) It is He Who has made for you the stars that you may follow the right direction in the darkness of the land and the sea. We have indeed spelled out signs for the people who have knowledge. (64)

(64) By 'signs' are meant all that support the proposition that there is only one God, that is, no one has either the attributes of God or any share in His authority or can rightfully claim any of the rights which belong exclusively to Him. But the ignorant cannot benefit from these signs, which are scattered all around, in order to arrive at an understanding of the Truth. Only those who observe the phenomena of the universe in a careful and systematic manner, and do so with a correct perspective, can truly benefit from these signs.

وَ هُوَ الَّذِىۡۤ اَنۡشَاَكُمۡ مِّنۡ نَّفۡسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ فَمُسۡتَقَرٌّ وَّمُسۡتَوۡدَعٌ ؕ قَدۡ فَصَّلۡنَا الۡاٰيٰتِ لِقَوۡمٍ يَّفۡقَهُوۡنَ ۹۸

(6:98) It is He Who created you out of a single being, [65] and appointed for each of you a time-limit and a resting place. We have indeed spelled out Our signs for those who can understand. [66]

(65) This means that God caused the human race to originate from one human being.

(66) If one were to observe carefully the creation of the human species, its division into male and female, the proliferation of the human race by procreation, the passing of life through its several stages in the womb of the mother from conception to childbirth, one would perceive innumerable signs to help one grasp the truth mentioned above. But only those who make proper use of their intellect can be led by means of these signs to an understanding of Reality. Those who live like animals, who are concerned merely with the satisfaction of their lusts and desires, can perceive nothing significant in these phenomena.

وَ هُوَ الَّذِیۡۤ اَنۡزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۚ فَاَخۡرَجۡنَا بِهٖ نَبَاتَ کُلِّ شَیۡءٍ فَاَخۡرَجۡنَا مِنۡهُ خَضِرًا نُّخۡرِجُ مِنۡهُ حَبًّا مُّتَرَاکِبًا ۚ وَ مِنَ النَّخۡلِ مِنۡ طَلۡعِهَا قِنۡوَانٌ دَانِیَةٌ وَّ جَنّٰتٍ مِّنۡ اَعۡنَابٍ وَّ الزَّیۡتُوۡنَ وَ الرُّمَّانَ مُشۡتَبِهًا وَّ غَیۡرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ؕ اُنۡظُرُوۡۤا اِلٰی ثَمَرِهٖۤ اِذَاۤ اَثۡمَرَ وَ یَنۡعِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکُمۡ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوۡمٍ یُّؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۹۹﴾

(6:99) And it is He Who has sent down water from the heavens, and thereby We have brought vegetation of every kind, and out of this We have brought forth green foliage and then from it close-packed ears of corn, and out of the palm-tree from the sheath of it - thick clustered dates, hanging down with heaviness, and gardens of vines, and the olive tree, and the pomegranate - all resembling one another and yet so different. Behold their fruit when they bear fruit and ripen! Surely, in all this there are signs for those who believe.

وَ جَعَلُوۡا لِلّٰهِ شُرَکَآءَ الۡجِنَّ وَ خَلَقَهُمۡ وَ خَرَقُوۡا لَهٗ بَنِیۡنَ وَ بَنٰتٍۢ بِغَیۡرِ عِلۡمٍ ؕ سُبۡحٰنَهٗ وَ تَعٰلٰی عَمَّا یَصِفُوۡنَ ﴿۱۰۰﴾

(6:100) And yet, some people have come to associate the jinn with Allah in His divinity, [67] even though it is He

Who created them; and in ignorance they impute to Him sons and daughters. (68) He is Holy and Exalted far above that which they attribute to Him.

(67) Because of man's imaginativeness and superstitious disposition, he has often held other invisible beings to be associated with God in His governance of the universe and in making and marring man's destiny. For example, the deity of rain, and the deity of vegetation, the god of wealth and the god of health, and so on. Such beliefs are found among all the polytheistic nations of the world.

(68) The ignorant Arabs considered angels to be the daughters of God. In the same way, other polytheistic nations wove a network of blood relationships with God, producing thereby a whole crop of gods and goddesses descended from the Creator.

بَدِيۡعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ اَنّٰى يَكُوۡنُ لَهٗ وَلَدٌ وَّلَمۡ تَكُنۡ لَّهٗ صَاحِبَةٌ ؕ وَ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَىۡءٍ ۚ وَ
هُوَ بِكُلِّ شَىۡءٍ عَلِيۡمٌ ۝١٠١

(6:101) He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son when He has had no mate? And He has created everything and He has full knowledge of all things.

ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمۡ ۚ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ فَاعۡبُدُوۡهُ ۚ وَ هُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ وَّكِيۡلٌ
۝١٠٢

(6:102) Such is Allah, your Lord. There is no god but He - the Creator of all things. Serve Him alone - for it is He Who is the guardian of everything.

لَا تُدۡرِكُهُ الۡاَبۡصَارُ ۫ وَ هُوَ يُدۡرِكُ الۡاَبۡصَارَ ۚ وَ هُوَ اللَّطِيۡفُ الۡخَبِيۡرُ ۝١٠٣

(6:103) No visual perception can encompass Him, even though He encompasses all visual perception. He is the All-Subtle, the All-Aware.

قَدۡ جَآءَكُمۡ بَصَآئِرُ مِنۡ رَّبِّكُمۡ ۚ فَمَنۡ اَبۡصَرَ فَلِنَفۡسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنۡ عَمِىَ فَعَلَيۡهَا ؕ وَ مَاۤ اَنَا عَلَيۡكُمۡ
بِحَفِيۡظٍ ۝١٠٤

(6:104) The lights of clear perception have now come to you from your Lord. Then, he who chooses to see clearly, does so for his own good; and he who chooses to remain blind, does so to his own harm. And, I am not your keeper. (69)

(69) Even though this statement is from God, it is expressed through the mouth of the Prophet (peace be on him). We observe that in the Quran the speaker frequently changes - sometimes it is God Who is speaking, sometimes it is the angel who carries the revelation, and sometimes a group of angels; on some occasions it is the Prophet (peace be on him) who is speaking, while on others it is the men of faith. Likewise, those addressed by the Quran also change - sometimes it is the Prophet (peace be' on him); sometimes it is the men of faith; sometimes it is the People of the Book; sometimes it is the unbelievers and the polytheists; sometimes it is the Quraysh; sometimes it is the Arabs; and sometimes, mankind as a whole. Regardless of these changes, however, the content of the message always remains the same - it consists of God's guidance to mankind.

The statement 'I am not your keeper' signifies that the task of the Prophet is confined to carrying the light of true guidance to others, it is then up to them either to use it to perceive Reality for themselves or to keep their eyes closed. The Prophet (peace he on him) is not asked to compel those who deliberately kept their eyes shut to open them, forcing them to see what they did not wish to see.

وَ كَذٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ ا لۡاٰيٰتِ وَ لِيَقُوۡلُوۡ ا دَرَسۡتَ وَ لِنُبَيِّنَهٗ لِقَوۡمٍ يَّعۡلَمُوۡنَ ١٠٥

(6:105) Thus do We make Our signs clear in diverse ways that they might say: 'You have learned this (from somebody)'; and 'We do this in order that We make the Truth clear to the people of knowledge.' (70)

(70) The same has been said earlier, viz. that genuine seekers after the Truth arrive at it even when it is couched in parables about such apparently trivial things as flies and gnats see (Surah al-

Baqarah 2:24). As for those who have been seized by a biased negativism, they are prone to ask, sarcastically: What have these trivial things to do with the Book of God? The same idea is expressed here in a slightly different form. The import of the statement is that the Book of God has become a touchstone, which helps mark off the true from the false. These include the sort of people who, once they have come to know the teachings of the Book of God, try in earnest to reflect on its substance and seek to benefit from the wisdom and admonition it contains. Another group reacts quite differently. When they hear or read the Book, their minds are not attracted by the substance of its message. Rather, their curiosity is aroused and they begin probing as to where this Prophet, who had no formal education, derived the teachings which the Book contains. And since a negative prejudice has already seized their hearts, they find it reasonable to conceive of any possibility except the possibility that the Quran is a revelation from God. Such people proclaim their opinion with such strong conviction that one might feel inclined to believe that they had indeed discovered the real 'source' of the Book by means of scientific investigation.

اِتَّبِعۡ مَاۤ اُوۡحِیَ اِلَیۡکَ مِنۡ رَّبِّکَ ۚ لَاۤ اِلٰہَ اِلَّا ہُوَ ۚ وَ اَعۡرِضۡ عَنِ الۡمُشۡرِکِیۡنَ ﴿۱۰۶﴾

(6:106) (O Muhammad!) Follow the revelation which has come to you from your Lord, other than Whom there is no god, and turn away from those who associate others with Allah in His divinity.

وَ لَوۡ شَآءَ اللّٰہُ مَاۤ اَشۡرَکُوۡا ؕ وَ مَا جَعَلۡنٰکَ عَلَیۡہِمۡ حَفِیۡظًا ۚ وَ مَاۤ اَنۡتَ عَلَیۡہِمۡ بِوَکِیۡلٍ ﴿۱۰۷﴾

(6:107) Had Allah so willed they would not have associated others with Him in His divinity; and We have not appointed you a watcher over them, and you are not their guardian. (71)

(71) It is emphasized that the Prophet (peace be on him) is only required to preach the Truth and try to call people to embrace it. His responsibility ends at that for he is, after all, not their warden. His task is to present this guidance and spare no effort in

elucidating the Truth. Anyone who still rejects it does so on his own responsibility. It is not part of the Prophet's task to compel anybody to follow the Truth, and he will not be held accountable for not having been able to bring an individual out of the fold of falsehood. Hence he should not overstrain his mind by his desire to make the blind see, or compel those bent on keeping their eyes shut, to observe. For, had it been an objective of God's universal plan not to allow anyone to remain devoted to falsehood, He need not have sent Prophets for that purpose. Could He not have turned all human beings, instantly, into devotees of the Truth by His mere will? Quite obviously God did not intend to do so. The entire basis of the Divine plan is that men should have free-will and be allowed to choose between the Truth and falsehood; that the Truth should be explained to them in order that they be tested with regard to their choice between truth and falsehood. The right attitude, therefore, is for them to follow the Straight Way which has been illuminated by the light bequeathed to them and to keep on calling others towards it. They should naturally value very highly all those who respond to the message of the Truth. Such persons should not be forsaken or neglected, however humble their station in the world. As for those who willfully reject the message of God, one need not pursue them too far. They should rather be left alone to proceed towards their doom since they themselves wish so, and are insistent on doing so.

وَ لَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِ نَ يَ عُ نَ هِ وُنِ اللّٖ فَيَسُبُّوا اللّٰ عَدوَ ا بِغَ ر عِلمٍ ؕ كَذٰلِکَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ اُمَّ عَمَلَهُم ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّهِم مَّرجِعُهُم فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَعمَلُونَ ١٠٨

(6:108) Do not revile those whom they invoke other than Allah, because they will revile Allah in ignorance out of spite. (72) For We have indeed made the deeds of every people seem fair to them. (73) Then, their return is to their Lord and He will inform them of what they have done.

(72) The Prophet (peace be on him) and his followers are admonished not to allow their proselytizing zeal to dominate them so that their polemics and controversial religious discussions either lead them to be offensive to the beliefs of non-Muslims or to abuse their religious leaders and deities. Far from bringing

people closer to the Truth, such an attitude is likely to alienate them from it further.

(73) Here we should bear in mind, as we have pointed out earlier, that God declares those things which take place as a result of the operation of the laws of nature to be His own acts, for it is He Who has made those laws. Whatever results from the operation of those laws, therefore, results from His command. Whenever God states that a certain act was His, the same might be described by humans as occurring in the natural course of things.

وَ اَ قۡسَمُوۡا بِاللّٰہِ جَہۡدَ اَیۡمَانِہِمۡ لَئِنۡ جَآءَتۡہُمۡ اٰیَۃٌ لَّیُؤۡمِنُنَّ بِہَا ؕ قُلۡ اِنَّمَا الۡاٰیٰتُ عِنۡدَ اللّٰہِ وَ مَا یُشۡعِرُکُمۡ ۙ اَنَّہَاۤ اِذَا جَآءَتۡ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۱۰۹﴾

(6:109) They swear by Allah with their most solemn oaths that if a sign (74) comes to them, they will certainly believe in it. Say: 'Signs are in Allah's power alone. (75) What will make you realize that even if those signs were to come, they would still not believe? (76)

(74) 'Sign' in this context signifies a tangible miracle which is so impressive that it leaves people with no alternative but to believe in the veracity of the Prophet (peace be on him) and the truth of his claim to have been appointed by God.

(75) The Prophet (peace be on him) denies his ability to perform miracles. That power lies with God alone. If God wants a miracle to take place, He has the power; if He does not want miracles to take place, none will.

And so indeed does every Prophet of God - Ed.

(76) These words are addressed to the Muslims. Driven by the restless yearning to see people embrace Islam - a yearning which they sometimes expressed in words - they wished some miracle to happen which might lead their erring brethren to the true faith. In response to this wish and longing they are told that their

embracing the true faith does not depend upon their observing any miraculous sign.

وَ نُقَلِّبُ فَـِٕدَتُہُم وَ اَبۡصَارَہُمۡ كَمَا لَمۡ يُؤۡمِنُوۡا بِهٖۤ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّ نَذَرُهُمۡ فِىۡ طُغۡيَانِهِمۡ يَعۡمَهُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۰﴾

(6:110) We are turning their hearts and eyes away from the Truth even as they did not believe in the first instance (77) - and We leave them in their insurgence to stumble blindly.

(77) This shows that they still suffer from the same mentality which had made them reject the call of the Prophet (peace be on him) at the outset. Their outlook has undergone no change. The same mental confusion, the same opacity of vision which had kept them from developing sound understanding and a correct perspective still warps their understanding and clouds their vision.

وَ لَوۡ اَنَّنَا نَزَّلۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡهِمُ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةَ وَ كَلَّمَهُمُ الۡمَوۡتٰى وَ حَشَرۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ كُلَّ شَىۡءٍ قُبُلًا مَّا كَانُوۡا لِيُؤۡمِنُوۡۤا اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكۡثَرَهُمۡ يَجۡهَلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۱﴾

(6:111) Even if We had sent angels down to them and the dead had spoken to them, and even if We had assembled before them all the things, face to face, they would still not believe unless it be Allah's will that they believe. (78) Most of them behave in utter ignorance.

(78) The people under discussion are so perverse that they do not prefer to embrace the Truth in preference to falsehood by rightly exercising their choice and volition. The only way that is left for them to become lovers of the Truth is, therefore, that by His overpowering will God should render them truth-loving not by their choice and volition, but by metamorphizing their very nature. Such a course, however, goes against the wisdom which underlies the creation of man. Hence it is futile to expect God to intervene in the matter and to force those people to believe by the exercise of His will.

وَ كَذٰلِكَ جَعَلۡنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِىٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيٰطِيۡنَ الۡاِنۡسِ وَ الۡجِنِّ يُوۡحِىۡ بَعۡضُهُمۡ اِلٰى بَعۡضٍ زُخۡرُفَ الۡقَوۡلِ غُرُوۡرًا ؕ وَ لَوۡ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوۡهُ فَذَرۡهُمۡ وَ مَا يَفۡتَرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۲﴾

(6:112) And so it is that against every Prophet We have set up the evil ones from among men and jinn, some of them inspire others with specious speech only by way of. delusion. (79) Had it been your Lord's will, they would not have done it. (80) Leave them alone to fabricate what they will.

(79) The Prophet (peace be on him) is told that he should not be unnerved even if the evil ones among both mankind and the jinn stood united against him and opposed him with all their might. For this was not the first time that such a thing had happened. Whenever a Prophet came and tried to lead people to the Truth, all the satanic forces joined hands to defeat his mission. 'Specious talk' signifies all the trickery and maneuvering to which the enemy resorts, all his efforts aimed at sowing doubts about Islam and undermining people's faith in it, so as to arouse them against both the Prophet (peace be on him) and his message. Taken as a whole, these are characterized as 'delusion', for the weapons used in their crusade by the opponents of the Truth have the effect of deluding others as well as themselves, no matter how beneficial and successful those weapons may appear to be.

(80) Furthermore, we should always bear in mind that, according to the Quran, there is a tremendous difference between 'God's will' and 'God's good pleasure'. The failure to differentiate between the two often gives rise to serious misconceptions. If a certain thing takes place in accord with the universal will of God, and thus by His sanction, that does not necessarily mean that God is pleased with it. Nothing at all takes place in the world unless God permits it to take place, unless He makes it a part of His scheme, and unless He makes it possible for that event to take place by creating its necessary conditions. The act of stealing on the part of a thief, the act of homicide on the part of a murderer, the wrong and corruption of the wrong-doer and the corrupt, the unbelief of the unbeliever and the polytheism of the polytheist - none of these are possible without the will of God. Likewise, the faith of the believer and the piety of the pious are inconceivable without the will of God. In short, both these require

the will of God. But whereas the things in the first category do not please Him, those in the second do.

Even though the will of God is oriented to ultimate good, the course of the realization of that good is paved with conflict between the forces of light and darkness, of good and evil, of what is sound and pure on the one hand and what is corrupt and defiled on the other. With larger interests in view, God has endowed man with the disposition of obedience as well as of disobedience. He has created in man Abrahamic and Mosaic as well as Nimrodic and Pharaonic potentialities. Both the pure, unadulterated human nature and the satanic urges are ingrained in man's being and have been provided with the opportunity to work themselves out by coming into conflict with each other. He has granted those species of His creatures who are possessed of authority (viz. man and jinn) the freedom to choose between good and evil. Whosoever chooses to act righteously has been given the power to do so, and the same is the case with him who chooses to be evil. People of both categories are in a position to use material resources within the framework of the broader considerations underlying God's- governance of His universe. God will be pleased, however, only with those who are working for good. God likes His creatures to exercise their freedom of choice properly and commit themselves to good of their own volition.

Unlike the angels, who carry out God's commands without resistance from any quarter, the task entrusted to men is to strive to establish the way of life sanctioned by God in the face of opposition and hostility from evil-doers and rebels against Him. In the framework of His universal will, God allows even those who have chosen the path of rebellion to strive for the realization of their goals, even as He grants the believers every opportunity to strive along the path of obedience and service to God. Despite this granting of freedom and choice to all there is no doubt that God is pleased with, and guides, directs, supports and strengthens the believers alone because their overall direction is to His liking. Nevertheless, they should not expect that by His supernatural intervention God will either force those who are disinclined to believe into believing or that He will forcibly remove

the satanic forces - among both men and jinn - who are resolved to spare neither their mental and physical energy nor their material resources to impede the triumph of the Truth. Those determined to strive in the cause of the Truth, and of virtue and righteousness are told that they must prove their earnest devotion by waging a fierce struggle against the devotees of falsehood. For had God wanted to use miracles to obliterate falsehood and usher in the reign of the Truth, He would not have required human beings to accomplish the task. He could have simply seen to it that no evil one remained in the world, leaving no possibility for polytheism and unbelief to exist.

وَ لِتَصغٰۤی اِلَیۡہِ اَفۡـِٕدَۃُ الَّذِیۡنَ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِالۡاٰخِرَۃِ وَ لِیَرۡضَوۡہُ وَ لِیَقۡتَرِفُوۡا مَا ہُمۡ مُّقۡتَرِفُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۳﴾

(6:113) So that the hearts of those who do not believe in the Life to Come might incline towards this attractive delusion, and that they may be well pleased with it and might acquire the evils that they are bent on acquiring.

اَفَغَیۡرَ اللّٰہِ اَبۡتَغِیۡ حَکَمًا وَّ ہُوَ الَّذِیۡۤ اَنۡزَلَ اِلَیۡکُمُ الۡکِتٰبَ مُفَصَّلًا ؕ وَ الَّذِیۡنَ اٰتَیۡنٰہُمُ الۡکِتٰبَ یَعۡلَمُوۡنَ اَنَّہٗ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّنۡ رَّبِّکَ بِالۡحَقِّ فَلَا تَکُوۡنَنَّ مِنَ الۡمُمۡتَرِیۡنَ ﴿۱۱۴﴾

(6:114) Shall I look upon anyone apart from Allah for judgement when it is He Who has revealed to you the Book in detail? (81) And those whom We gave the Book (before you) know that this (Book) has been revealed in truth by your Lord. Do not, then, be among the doubters. (82)

(81) The implied speaker in this sentence is the Prophet (peace be on him) and the words are addressed to the Muslims. The purpose of the sentence is to impress upon the Muslims that God has elucidated the relevant truths, and has also proclaimed that in their endeavor to make the Truth prevail they will have to follow the path of striving and struggle. The devotees of the Truth should, therefore, resort to those means which human beings normally employ for the successful achievement of their objectives rather than wait for any supernatural intervention that would enable them to achieve their mission without struggle and

sacrifice. Moreover, since God Himself had chosen that human effort rather than supernatural intervention should lead to the prevalence of the Truth, who had the power to change this basic fact and bring about the victory of the Truth without any resort to human effort and sacrifice.

(82) This is no mere concoction designed to explain away the current problems. All those versed in the Scriptures, and possessing true understanding of the mission of the Prophets (peace be on them all), will confirm that everything in the Qur'an is perfectly true and in fact constitutes that eternal truth which cannot suffer any change or modification.

وَ تَمَّتۡ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّکَ صِدۡقًا وَّ عَدۡلًا ؕ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِکَلِمٰتِهٖ ۚ وَ هُوَ السَّمِیۡعُ الۡعَلِیۡمُ ﴿۱۱۵﴾

(6:115) The Word of your Lord is perfect in truthfulness and justice; no one can change His words. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

وَ اِنۡ تُطِعۡ اَکۡثَرَ مَنۡ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ یُضِلُّوۡکَ عَنۡ سَبِیۡلِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنۡ یَّتَّبِعُوۡنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَ اِنۡ هُمۡ اِلَّا یَخۡرُصُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۶﴾

(6:116) (O Muhammad!) If you obey the majority of those who live on earth, they will lead you away from Allah's path. They only follow idle fancies, indulging in conjecture. (83)

(83) One need not follow the way of life of the majority, for the majority tend to follow their conjectures and fancies rather than sound knowledge. Their beliefs, their ideas and concepts, their philosophies of life, the guiding principles of their conduct, their laws - all these are founded on conjecture. On the contrary, the way of life which pleases God, was revealed by Him and hence is based on true knowledge rather than conjecture. Instead of trying to discover the way of life of the majority, a seeker after truth should, therefore, persevere in the way prescribed by God, even if he finds himself to be a solitary traveller.

اِنَّ رَبَّکَ هُوَ اَعۡلَمُ مَنۡ یَّضِلُّ عَنۡ سَبِیۡلِهٖ وَ هُوَ اَعۡلَمُ بِالۡمُهۡتَدِیۡنَ ﴿۱۱۷﴾

(6:117) And your - Lord knows well who stray from His path, and also those who are rightly-guided.

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِاٰيٰتِهٖ مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ١١٨

(6:118) If you believe in the signs of Allah, eat (the flesh) of that over which Allah's name has been pronounced. (84)

(84) Many nations have imposed on themselves superfluous religious taboos, which include a variety of dietary restrictions. On the one hand, they have declared lawful many of the things which God has forbidden. On the other, there are many things which God has made lawful but which some people have forbidden to themselves. Some people have even gone so far as to consider eating animals slaughtered in the name of God as unlawful, while those slaughtered with no mention of God's name may be eaten. God repudiates this and urges the Muslims - if they really believe in Him and obey His injunctions - to smash the superstitious and prejudiced notions contrived by human beings in disregard of God's revealed guidance, and to recognize as unlawful all that God has declared to be unlawful, and as lawful all that God has declared to be lawful.

وَمَا لَكُمْ اَلَّا تَاْكُلُوْا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَّا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ اِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ اِلَيْهِ ؕ وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا لَّيُضِلُّوْنَ بِاَهْوَآئِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ١١٩

(6:119) And how is it that you do not eat of that over which Allah's name has been pronounced even though He has clearly spelled out to you what He has forbidden you unless you are constrained to it? (85) Many indeed say misleading things without knowledge, driven merely by their lowly desires. But your Lord knows well the transgressors.

(85) See (Surah al-Nahl 16:15). We may observe in passing that this allusion indirectly establishes that Surah al-Nahl was revealed before the present surah.

وَ ذَرُوۡا ظَاهِرَ الۡاِثۡمِ وَ بَاطِنَهٗ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ يَكۡسِبُوۡنَ الۡاِثۡمَ سَيُجۡزَوۡنَ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَقۡتَرِفُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۰﴾

(6:120) Abstain from sin, be it either open or secret. Indeed those who commit sins shall surely be requited for all they have done.

وَ لَا تَاۡكُلُوۡا مِمَّا لَمۡ يُذۡكَرِ اسۡمُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيۡهِ وَ اِنَّهٗ لَفِسۡقٌ ؕ وَ اِنَّ الشَّيٰطِيۡنَ لَيُوۡحُوۡنَ اِلٰٓى اَوۡلِيٰٓـئِهِمۡ لِيُجَادِلُوۡكُمۡ ۚ وَ اِنۡ اَطَعۡتُمُوۡهُمۡ اِنَّكُمۡ لَمُشۡرِكُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۱﴾

(6:121) Do not eat of (the animal) over which the name of Allah has not been pronounced (at the time of its slaughtering), for that is a transgression. And behold, the evil ones do inspire doubts and objections into the hearts of their friends so that they dispute with you; (86) but if you obey them, you will surely yourselves turn into those who associate others with Allah in His divinity. (87)

(86) It has been reported in a tradition transmitted by 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas that the Jewish religious scholars used to prompt the ignorant people of Arabia to address many enquiries to the Prophet (peace be on him) so as to discredit him. One of the questions they taught them to ask was: 'Why is it that an animal killed by (the act of) God should be deemed prohibited, while one killed by us is considered lawful? 'This is a common example of the warped mentality of the People of the Book. They strained their minds to contrive such questions so as to create doubts in people's minds and to provide them with intellectual weapons in their fight against the Truth.

(87) To acknowledge the overlordship of God, yet to follow at the same time the orders and ways of those who have turned away from Him, amounts to associating others with God in His divinity. True belief in the unity of God consists in orienting one's entire life to the obedience and service of God. Those who believe that any other being besides God is to he acknowledged in principle as having an independent claim on man's unreserved obedience should know that such acknowledgement amounts to associating others with God in His divinity at the level of belief.

On the other hand, if they actually do obey those who, in sheer disregard of God's guidance and injunctions, arrogate to themselves the right to declare according to their whims certain things to be lawful and others to be unlawful, and to bid and forbid people as they please, this amounts to associating others with God in His divinity at the level of action.

اَوَ مَنۡ كَانَ مَيۡتًا فَاَحۡيَيۡنٰهُ وَ جَعَلۡنَا لَهٗ نُوۡرًا يَّمۡشِىۡ بِهٖ فِى النَّاسِ كَمَنۡ مَّثَلُهٗ فِى الظُّلُمٰتِ لَيۡسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنۡهَا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ مَا كَانُوۡا يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۲﴾

(6:122) He who was dead and whom We raised to life, [88] and We set a light for him to walk among men - is he like the one steeped in darkness out of which he does not come out? [89]. Thus have their own doings been made to seem fair to the unbelievers. [90]

(88) 'Death' signifies here the state of ignorance and lack of consciousness, whereas 'life' denotes the state of knowledge and true cognition, the state of awareness of Reality. He who cannot distinguish between right and wrong and does not know the Straight Way for human life, may be alive on the biological plane, but his essential humanity is not. He may be a living animal but is certainly not a living human being. A living human being is one who can distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, honesty from dishonesty.

(89) The question is: 'How can they expect one who has been able to attain genuine consciousness of his true human nature and who, by virtue of his knowledge of the Truth, can clearly discern the Straight Way among the numerous crooked ways, to live like those who lack true consciousness and go on stumbling in the darkness of ignorance and folly?'

(90) The law of God with regard to those to whom light is presented but who willfully refuse to accept it, preferring to follow their crooked paths even after they have been invited to follow the Straight Way, is that in the course of time such people begin to cherish darkness, and to enjoy groping their way in the dark, stumbling and falling as they proceed. They tend to mistake cacti

for orchids, thorns for roses. They find pleasure in every act of evil and corruption. They look forward to renewed experiences of corruption, hoping that where they were previously unsuccessful they will now find success.

وَ كَذٰلِكَ جَعَلۡ نَا فِىۡ كُلِّ قَرۡيَةٍ اَكٰبِرَ مُجۡرِمِيۡهَا لِيَمۡكُرُوۡا فِيۡهَا ؕ وَ مَا يَمۡكُرُوۡنَ اِلَّا بِاَنۡفُسِهِمۡ وَ مَا يَشۡعُرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۳﴾

(6:123) Thus We have appointed the leaders of the wicked ones in every land to weave their plots; but in truth they plot only to their own harm, without even realizing it.

وَ اِذَا جَآءَتۡهُمۡ اٰيَةٌ قَالُوۡا لَنۡ نُّؤۡمِنَ حَتّٰى نُؤۡتٰى مِثۡلَ مَاۤ اُوۡتِىَ رُسُلُ اللّٰهِ ؘ اَللّٰهُ اَعۡلَمُ حَيۡثُ يَجۡعَلُ رِسَالَتَهٗ ؕ سَيُصِيۡبُ الَّذِيۡنَ اَجۡرَمُوۡا صَغَارٌ عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ وَ عَذَابٌ شَدِيۡدٌ ۢ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَمۡكُرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۴﴾

(6:124) Whenever there comes to them a sign from Allah, they say: 'We will not believe until we are given what was given to the Messengers of Allah.' (91) Allah knows best where to place His message. Soon shall these wicked ones meet with humiliation and severe chastisement from Allah for all their evil plotting.

(91) This shows that they were unwilling to believe in the statement of the Prophets that an angel of God came to each of them and delivered the message of God. They would believe, they said, only if the angel approached them directly and intimated God's message to them.

فَمَنۡ يُّرِدِ اللّٰهُ اَنۡ يَّهۡدِيَهٗ يَشۡرَحۡ صَدۡرَهٗ لِلۡاِسۡلَامِ ۚ وَ مَنۡ يُّرِدۡ اَنۡ يُّضِلَّهٗ يَجۡعَلۡ صَدۡرَهٗ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَاَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِى السَّمَآءِ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَجۡعَلُ اللّٰهُ الرِّجۡسَ عَلَى الَّذِيۡنَ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۵﴾

(6:125) Thus, (it is a fact that) whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast for Islam; (92) and whomsoever He wills to let go astray, He causes his breast to become strait and constricted, as if he were climbing towards the heaven. Thus Allah lays the abomination (of flight from and hatred of Islam) on those who do not believe

(92) 'To open someone's breast to Islam' means to make him feel fully convinced of the truth of Islam and to remove all his doubts, hesitations and reluctance.

وَ ۟ ذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّکَ مُسۡتَقِیۡمًا ؕ قَدۡ فَصَّلۡنَا الۡاٰیٰتِ لِقَوۡمٍ یَّذَّکَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۶﴾

(6:126) even though this way is the straight way of your Lord, and We have distinguished its signs to those who heed to admonition.

لَہُمۡ دَارُ السَّلٰمِ عِنۡدَ رَبِّہِمۡ وَ ہُوَ وَلِیُّہُمۡ بِمَا کَانُوۡا یَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۷﴾

(6:127) Theirs shall be an abode of peace (93) with their Lord - their Protector - in recompense for all they have done.

(93) The righteous will enjoy 'the Abode of Peace' since there he will be safe from every misfortune and evil.

وَ یَوۡمَ یَحۡشُرُہُمۡ جَمِیۡعًا ۚ یٰمَعۡشَرَ الۡجِنِّ قَدِ اسۡتَکۡثَرۡتُمۡ مِّنَ الۡاِنۡسِ ۚ وَ قَالَ اَوۡلِیٰٓـُٔہُمۡ مِّنَ الۡاِنۡسِ رَبَّنَا اسۡتَمۡتَعَ بَعۡضُنَا بِبَعۡضٍ وَّ بَلَغۡنَاۤ اَجَّلۡتَ لَنَا ؕ قَالَ النَّارُ مَثۡوٰىکُمۡ خٰلِدِیۡنَ فِیۡہَاۤ اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللّٰہُ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ حَکِیۡمٌ عَلِیۡمٌ ﴿۱۲۸﴾

(6:128) And on the Day when He shall muster them all together, He will say (to the jinn): (94) 'O assembly of the jinn, you have seduced a good many of mankind.' And their companions from among the humans will say: 'Our Lord! We did indeed benefit from one another (95) and now have reached the term which You had set for us.' Thereupon Allah will say: 'The Fire is now your abode, and therein you shall abide.' Only those whom Allah wills shall escape the Fire. Surely your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. (96)

(94) The term Finn here refers to the evil ones among the jinn.

(95) This means that they had derived unfair benefit from one another and had served their selfish ends by mutual deception.

(96) Even though God has the right to punish whoever He wishes and to forgive whoever He wishes, His punishing and

forgiving will be neither arbitrary nor whimsical. It will rather be founded on absolute knowledge and wisdom. God will forgive those whom He knows not to be responsible for their guilt, and thus not liable to punishment according to His wisdom and justice.

وَ كَذٰلِكَ نُوَلِّیۡ بَعۡضَ الظّٰلِمِیۡنَ بَعۡضًۢا بِمَا كَانُوۡا یَكۡسِبُوۡنَ۠ ﴿۱۲۹﴾

(6:129) In this manner We shall make the wrong-doers friends of each other (in the Hereafter) because they earned (evil together in the world). (97)

(97) Just as the wrong-doers had been accomplices in sin and evil during their earthly life, they would remain companions in the After-life as well and share its punishment.

یٰمَعۡشَرَ الۡجِنِّ وَ الۡاِنۡسِ اَلَمۡ یَاۡتِكُمۡ رُسُلٌ مِّنۡكُمۡ یَقُصُّوۡنَ عَلَیۡكُمۡ اٰیٰتِیۡ وَ یُنۡذِرُوۡنَكُمۡ لِقَآءَ یَوۡمِكُمۡ هٰذَا ؕ قَالُوۡا شَهِدۡنَا عَلٰۤی اَنۡفُسِنَا وَ غَرَّتۡهُمُ الۡحَیٰوةُ الدُّنۡیَا وَ شَهِدُوۡا عَلٰۤی اَنۡفُسِهِمۡ اَنَّهُمۡ كَانُوۡا كٰفِرِیۡنَ ﴿۱۳۰﴾

(6:130) (Then Allah will also ask them): 'O assembly of jinn and men! Did there not come to you Messengers from among yourselves, relating to you My signs, and warning you of the encounter of this your Day (of Judgement)?' They will say: 'Yes, we bear witness against ourselves.' (98) They have been deluded by the life of this world, and they will bear witness against themselves that they had disbelieved. (99)

(98) The wrong-doers would confess that even though the Prophets had come, in succession, in order to inform them of the Truth, it was their own fault that they did not respond to their call.

(99) They were deniers of, and disbelievers in, rather than ignorant of the Truth. They acknowledged that! the Truth had been conveyed to them and that they had refused to accept it.

ذٰلِكَ اَنۡ لَّمۡ یَكُنۡ رَّبُّكَ مُهۡلِكَ الۡقُرٰی بِظُلۡمٍ وَّ اَهۡلُهَا غٰفِلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۳۱﴾

(6:131) (They will be made to bear this witness to show that) it is not the way of your Lord to destroy cities unjustly while their people were unaware of the Truth. (100)

(100) God does not want His creatures to have any valid reason to complain that He had left them ignorant of the Right Way, and then convicted them of error. God has forestalled any such grievance by sending Prophets and revealing Holy Books to warn both jinn and human beings. If people continue to falter in spite of God's arrangements for their guidance, they themselves are to blame for the punishment they will receive, and they have no justification for blaming their misfortune on God.

وَ لِكُلٍّ دَرَجٰتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوۡا ؕ وَ مَا رَبُّکَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا یَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۳۲﴾

(6:132) Everyone is assigned a degree according to his deed. Your Lord is not heedless of what they do.

وَ رَبُّکَ الۡغَنِیُّ ذُو الرَّحۡمَۃِ ؕ اِنۡ یَّشَاۡ یُذۡہِبۡکُمۡ وَ یَسۡتَخۡلِفۡ مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِکُمۡ مَّا یَشَآءُ کَمَاۤ اَنۡشَاَکُمۡ مِّنۡ ذُرِّیَّۃِ قَوۡمٍ اٰخَرِیۡنَ ﴿۱۳۳﴾

(6:133) Your Lord is Self-Sufficient, full of compassion. (101) If He wills, He can put you away and cause whomever He wills to succeed you just as He has produced you from the seed of another people.

(101) The Qur'anic statement: 'Your Lord is Self-Sufficient' signifies that God is in need of nothing from anyone, that none of His interests will be jeopardized by disobedience to Him, and that no benefit will accrue to Him from obedience. Even if all human beings became disobedient, God's dominion will not shrink. Nor will His dominion expand if everybody were to become obedient and serve and worship Him as they ought to. God is dependent neither upon their show of veneration nor upon their offerings. He lavishes His limitless treasures on human beings and seeks nothing in return.
The other statement, namely that 'Your Lord is full of compassion', has been made here to emphasize two things. First, that when God urges human beings to follow the Right Way, and

asks them not to do anything in conflict with Ultimate Reality, He does not do so because their good behavior benefits Him or their misconduct harms Him. He does so because good conduct is beneficial to man himself, as evil conduct is harmful to him. Hence it is out of sheer benevolence that God urges man to develop righteous conduct, for it will raise him to great heights, and He urges him to avoid evil conduct because it will lead to his own degradation. Second, that God is not unduly stern in judging man. He gets no pleasure from punishing people. He is not on the look-out for slight lapses for which to convict and persecute people. God is highly compassionate towards all His creatures and governs with utmost mercy and benevolence, and the same characterizes His dealings with human beings as well. Hence, He constantly forgives the sins of people. Many disobey, indulge in sins, commit crimes, disregard God's commands, even though they are nourished by the sustenance He provides. God, nevertheless, continually treats them with forbearance and forgives them. Again and again, He grants them respite in order that they may take heed, understand things properly and reform themselves. Had He been excessively stern, He could even have obliterated them instantly and raised up another people. He could have put an end to humanity and brought into being an altogether different species of creation.

اِنَّ مَا تُوۡعَوۡنَ لَاٰتٍ ۙ وَّ مَاۤ اَنۡتُمۡ بِمُعۡجِزِيۡنَ ﴿۱۳۴﴾

(6:134) Surely what you have been promised shall come to pass; [102] and you do not have the power to frustrate (Allah).

(102) This refers to the Resurrection, when human beings of every epoch will be raised anew and made to stand before God for final judgement.

قُلۡ يٰقَوۡمِ اعۡمَلُوۡا عَلٰى مَكَانَتِكُمۡ اِنِّىۡ عَامِلٌ ۚ فَسَوۡفَ تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ مَنۡ تَكُوۡنُ لَهٗ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفۡلِحُ الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ ﴿۱۳۵﴾

(6:135) Say (O Muhammad!): 'O people! Work in your place; and I too am at work. [103] Soon you will know in whose

favor the ultimate decision will be. Surely the wrong-doers will not prosper.'

(103) If people prefer to ignore the Prophet's admonition and do not recant their misconduct, they are at liberty to follow their chosen path, but they should let the Prophet (peace be on him) follow his. The ultimate results of their conduct will, in due time, become evident to all - to the Prophet (peace be on him) as well as to his opponents.

وَ جَعَلُوۡا لِلّٰہِ مِمَّا ذَرَاَ مِنَ الۡحَرۡثِ وَ الۡاَنۡعَامِ نَصِیۡبًا فَقَالُوۡا ہٰذَا لِلّٰہِ بِزَعۡمِہِمۡ وَ ہٰذَا لِشُرَکَآئِنَا ۫ فَمَا کَانَ لِشُرَکَآئِہِمۡ فَلَا یَصِلُ اِلَی اللّٰہِ ۚ وَ مَا کَانَ لِلّٰہِ فَہُوَ یَصِلُ اِلٰی شُرَکَآئِہِمۡ ؕ سَآءَ مَا یَحۡکُمُوۡنَ ﴿۱۳۶﴾

(6:136) They (104) assign to Allah a portion out of the produce and cattle that He has created, saying out of their fancy: 'This is for Allah' - so they deem -'and this is for the associates (of Allah) whom we have contrived.' (105) Then, the portion assigned to the beings whom they have set up as associates (of Allah) does not reach Allah, but the portion assigned to Allah reaches the beings they set up as associates (of Allah)! (106) Indeed evil is what they decide!

(104) There now follows an elucidation of the 'ignorance' which those people-insistently clung to, and which they were not prepared to forsake. They are also told about that major 'wrong' which, if not abandoned, will bar their way to salvation.

(105) They themselves acknowledged that the earth belongs to God, and that it is He Who causes the vegetation to grow. They also affirmed that God is the creator of the animals which were yoked to their service. They believed, however, that the grace of God for them was the outcome of the blessing and benediction of the angels, jinn, heavenly stars, spirits of their pious ancestors and so on, who cared for their well-being and were their patrons. They therefore used to make a two-fold division of their harvest and livestock offerings. One part was devoted to God in recognition of their gratitude to Him for having granted them farms and animals, while the rest was devoted to the household

gods of either their family or tribes in order to ensure their continuing grace and benediction.

First, God censures them for this iniquity and asks them - since all those animals were created and had been granted to them by God alone - what justification there is for making offerings to others. Is it not sheer ingratitude to ascribe the acts of benevolence and grace of the true Benefactor to the intercession of others, and to associate them with God in thanksgiving?

Second, they are censured indirectly for assigning quite an arbitrary share in their offerings to God, as if they themselves were the law-maker who could ascribe shares to God and others as they wished. To God alone belong all the bounties He has given man, and only His Law should therefore determine what part of those bounties should be offered to Him in thanksgiving and how the remaining should be spent. Hence even if they spend something in the way of Allah, for the poor and the deprived, but according to their own will, that does not deserve to be accepted by Him.

(106) This is subtle sarcasm at the trickery to which the polytheists resorted while dividing the offerings between God and the partners whom they had set up with Him. By one device and another they increased the share of the false deities, which only showed that their heart lay with those sham partners of God rather than with Him.

It is instructive to recall those tricks. If, while they were apportioning God's share of cereals and fruits, anything belonging to His share fell out of its place, it used to be added to the portion earmarked for the share of God's partners. On the contrary, if any part of the, partners' share fell out or got mixed up with the portion earmarked for God, they were most careful to return it to where it belonged. Whenever they were criticized for this, they had a number of interesting apologies to offer. They said, for instance, that being the Creator, God is Self-Sufficient and hence He does not care if His portion is in some way reduced. As for the

'partners', they were not after all self-sufficient and would therefore take them to task for the slightest diminution in their share.

In order to grasp what lay at the root of these superstitions, it is essential to know that the portion which these ignorant people earmarked for God was devoted to helping the indigent, the poor, travelers, orphans and so on. On the other hand, the portion earmarked for offerings to the partners' actually went either directly to the coffers of the priestly class or was offered at the shrines and thus ultimately reached the priests and caretakers of those shrines. Over the course of centuries these selfish religious leaders had impressed upon those simple-minded people that there was no harm in God's share being reduced, but that of God's dear ones, far from being diminished, should be increased.

وَ كَذٰلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الۡمُشۡرِكِيۡنَ قَتۡلَ اَوۡلَادِهِمۡ شُرَكَآؤُهُمۡ لِيُرۡدُوۡهُمۡ وَ لِيَلۡبِسُوۡا عَلَيۡهِمۡ دِيۡنَهُمۡ ؕ وَ لَوۡ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مَا فَعَلُوۡهُ فَذَرۡهُمۡ وَ مَا يَفۡتَرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۳۷﴾

(6:137) And, likewise, the beings supposed to have a share in Allah's divinity have made the slaying of their offspring seem lawful to many of those who associate others with Allah in His divinity (107) so that they may ruin them (108) and confound them regarding their faith. (109) If Allah had so willed, they would not have done that. Leave them alone to persist in their fabrication. (110)

(107) The word 'partners' is now used in a different sense. In this verse the word 'partners' denotes those human beings and devils who had legitimized infanticide and even represented it as a commendable act.

The reason for calling such people 'partners' is that just as God alone deserves to be worshipped, so He alone has the right to make laws for His creatures and to determine the limits of what is lawful and what is unlawful. Also, just as consecrating acts of devotion to anyone other than God amounts to setting up partners with Him, so to follow man-made laws in the belief that human beings have the right to be their own law-makers amounts

to acknowledging others as partners of God. Both these acts amount to setting up partners with Him, irrespective of whether or not man applies the word 'God' to those before whom he makes ritual offerings, or to those whose laws he considers to be essentially right and binding for men.

It is pertinent to recall that three forms of infanticide were practiced among the Arabs, and the Qur'an alludes to each:

(1) Girls were put to death either to forestall the intrusion of a son-in-law, to prevent them from falling into the hands of enemies in the event of an outbreak of tribal feuding or to stop them from becoming a source of disgrace for any other reason.

(2) Both male and female children were killed if parents thought they would not be able to support them and that they would thus become an unendurable burden.

(3) Children of both sexes were placed as sacrificial offerings on the altars of the deities in order to gratify them.

(108) The use of the word 'ruin' in this verse is significant. It denotes, in the first place, the moral ruination of a people. A man whose callousness and cruelty reach the point where he begins to kill his offspring with his own hands not only becomes bereft of the essence of humanity, but has sunk even lower than the animals. Moreover, this signifies the ruin of a people and of the human race. This is because infanticide necessarily leads to loss of population which is detrimental to the interests of mankind and also of each nation, since it prevents those who could have carried the legacy of a nation from either being born or puts an end to their lives after ,they are born. This rule also signifies the ultimate ruin, i.e. in the Hereafter. For indeed anyone who treats innocent children with such high-handedness, who cold-bloodedly slaughters the essence of his humanity, who acts so sordidly towards the human species as such, and even towards his own people, deserves severe punishment from God.

109. In the Jahiliyah, the Age of Ignorance, the Arabs both identified themselves with Abraham and Ishmael and were quite convinced that they were indeed followers of Abraham and

Ishmael. They therefore considered their religion to be one that had been prescribed by God. The fact, however, was that over the course of centuries a number of innovations had overgrown the religion preached by Abraham and Ishmael. These innovations, which had been introduced by their religious leaders, the tribal chiefs and the elders of noted families, had become hallowed with the passage of time, and were considered an integral part of their original religion. No authentic traces of this original religion, however, existed in the Arab traditions, nor in written sources nor in historical records as such. Hence, when innovations made their inroads into their religious life, they failed to perceive both the innovations and the innovators. This rendered the entire religious tradition of the Arabs unauthentic in the sight of the people of Arabia themselves. They could not assert with conviction which elements were part of the original God-given religion, and which were mere innovations.

(110) Had God not so willed, they could never have kept to their false ways. But God willed that everybody should be allowed to pursue his own choice. Hence, if people do not believe in spite of the Prophet's admonition, and persist in their false ways, they must be allowed to do as they please. One need not hound such people and pester them into accepting the Truth.

وَقَالُوا هٰذِهٖۤ اَنۡعَامٌ وَّحَرۡثٌ حِجۡرٌ ۖ لَّا يَطۡعَمُهَاۤ اِلَّا مَنۡ نَّشَآءُ بِزَعۡمِهِمۡ وَاَنۡعَامٌ حُرِّمَتۡ ظُهُوۡرُهَا وَاَنۡعَامٌ لَّا يَذۡكُرُوۡنَ اسۡمَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيۡهَا افۡتِرَآءً عَلَيۡهِ ؕ سَيَجۡزِيۡهِمۡ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَفۡتَرُوۡنَ ١٣٨

(6:138) They say: 'These animals and these crops are sacrosanct: none may eat of them save those whom we will' - imposing interdictions of their own contriving. (111) And they declare that it is forbidden to burden the backs of certain cattle, and these are the cattle over which they do not pronounce the name of Allah. (112) All these are false fabrications against Allah, (113) and He will soon requite them for all that they fabricate.

(111) There was a practice among the people of Arabia whereby they used to consecrate certain animals and farms to certain shrines, and at offerings at certain altars. These consecrated offerings could not be used by everybody. An elaborate code laid

down what kind of offering could be used by what kind of people. God not only judges such practices to be polytheistic, but also censures them as man-made innovations. God was the master of all that they had consecrated as offerings to the deities. He had neither encumbered human beings with the need to make any of those offerings and consecrations nor imposed those restrictions on what they might consume. These were the willful inventions of headstrong and rebellious people who attributed to themselves the authority to make laws as they pleased.

(112) Traditions indicate that there were certain ritual offerings, and that on certain occasions animals were consecrated for sacrifice at which it was deemed unlawful to pronounce the name of God. It was also prohibited to ride such animals during the Pilgrimage, since at that time the pilgrim pronounced the name of God when he recited the formula: Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk. Every care was taken not to pronounce the name of God at the time of milking, mounting, slaughtering and eating of such animals.

(113) Even though those rules had not been laid down by God, people followed them under the false impression that they had been prescribed by Him. They could not adduce any injunction from God in support of such a belief, and all that they could claim was that it was an integral part of their ancestors' way of life.

وَ قَالُوۡا مَا فِیۡ بُطُوۡنِ هٰذِهِ الۡاَنۡعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ لِّذُکُوۡرِنَا وَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلٰۤی اَزۡوَاجِنَا ۚ وَ اِنۡ یَّکُنۡ مَّیۡتَةً فَهُمۡ فِیۡهِ شُرَکَآءُ ؕ سَیَجۡزِیۡهِمۡ وَصۡفَهُمۡ ؕ اِنَّهٗ حَکِیۡمٌ عَلِیۡمٌ ﴿۱۳۹﴾

(6:139) And they say: 'What is within the bellies of such-and-such cattle is exclusively for our males and is forbidden to our females; but if it be born dead, they all may share in it.' (114) He will soon requite them for all that they (falsely) attribute to Allah. He is All-Wise, All-Knowing.

(114) One of the provisions of this self-contrived religious code of the Arabs was that the flesh of the young, born of the animals consecrated as offerings to the deities, might be eaten by males

but not by females. Persons of both sexes were allowed to eat its flesh if it had died either a natural death or was dead at birth.

قَدۡ خَسِرَ الَّذِيۡنَ قَتَلُوۡۤا اَوۡلَادَهُمۡ سَفَهًا بِغَيۡرِ عِلۡمٍ وَّ حَرَّمُوۡا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللّٰهُ افۡتِرَآءً عَلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ قَدۡ ضَلُّوۡا وَ مَا كَانُوۡا مُهۡتَدِيۡنَ ﴿۱۴۰﴾

(6:140) Those who slayed their children in folly, without knowledge,. And forbade the sustenance that Allah has provided them, falsely ascribing that to Allah, are utter losers; they have gone astray, and are certainly not among those guided to the right way. (115)

(115) It is put to them plainly that even though such practices had been introduced by their forefathers, religious guides and outstanding leaders, the fact remained that those practices were inherently unsound. That those practices had come down from their ancestors and venerated elders did not necessarily legitimize them. These callous people had introduced such inhuman customs as infanticide, and, without any justification whatsoever, had prohibited to the creatures of God food and drink which He had created. They had also introduced many innovations themselves, making them part of their religion and ascribing them to God. How could such people be considered either to have attained salvation or to be rightly guided? Even though venerated by them as their ancestors, they were nevertheless misguided and were destined to see the evil consequences of their misdeeds.

وَ هُوَ الَّذِيۡۤ اَنۡشَاَ جَنّٰتٍ مَّعۡرُوۡشٰتٍ وَّ غَيۡرَ مَعۡرُوۡشٰتٍ وَّ النَّخۡلَ وَ الزَّرۡعَ مُخۡتَلِفًا اُكُلُهٗ وَ الزَّيۡتُوۡنَ وَ الرُّمَّانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَّ غَيۡرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ؕ كُلُوۡا مِنۡ ثَمَرِهٖۤ اِذَاۤ اَثۡمَرَ وَ اٰتُوۡا حَقَّهٗ يَوۡمَ حَصَادِهٖ ۫ وَ لَا تُسۡرِفُوۡا ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الۡمُسۡرِفِيۡنَ ﴿۱۴۱﴾

(6:141) It is He Who has brought into being gardens (116) - the trellised and un-trellised - and the palm trees, and crops, all varying in taste, and the olive and pomegranates, all resembling one another and yet so different. Eat of their fruits when they come to fruition and pay His due on the day of harvesting. And do not exceed the proper limits, for He does not love those who exceed the proper limits.

(116) The Arabic expression "Jannaatim Ma'rushaatin wa khairu ma'rushatin" signifies two kinds of gardens: first, those consisting of trellised plants and, second, those consisting of trees which stand on their own.

وَ مِنَ الۡاَ نۡعَامِ حَمُوۡلَۃً وَّ فَرۡشًا ؕ کُلُوۡا مِمَّا رَزَقَکُمُ اللّٰہُ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعُوۡا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّیۡطٰنِ ؕ اِنَّہٗ لَکُمۡ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِیۡنٌ ۙ﴿۱۴۲﴾

(6:142) And of the cattle (He has reared) some for burden, and some whose flesh you eat and whose skins and hair you use to spread the ground. (117) Eat of the sustenance Allah has provided you and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan, for surely he is your open enemy. (118)

(117) The word "Farasha" (which means 'to spread, to pave, to cover the ground, floor or path') has been used in the context of cattle either (1) because they are relatively short, and in moving about seem to be touching the ground, (2) because when they are slaughtered, they have to be laid on the ground, or (3) because their skins and hair are used for furnishing purposes.

(118) It becomes clear from the context that God wants to emphasize three things. First, that the orchards, fields and cattle are all bounties of God. No one else has made any contribution to them and hence no one is entitled to any share in the thanks that man ought to give Him in return for these bounties. Second, since all those things are bounties of God, one ought to follow the laws of God alone while making use of them. No one else has the right to regulate their use. To acknowledge oneself bound by customs and practices laid down by others than God, and to make offerings out of a feeling of gratitude for beneficence to someone other than God constitute acts of rebellion and amount to following Satan. Third, as God has created all these things for the fulfilment of man's needs, they should not be unnecessarily suspended from use or be regarded as prohibited. All restrictions on the use of the means of sustenance and other bounties of God based on conjecture or superstition, are not to His liking at all.

ثَمٰنِيَةَ اَزْوَاجٍ ۚ مِنَ الضَّاْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ ۗ قُلْ ءٰٓالذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ اَمِ الْاُنْثَيَيْنِ اَمَّا
اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ اَرْحَامُ الْاُنْثَيَيْنِ ۗ نَبِّـُٔوْنِيْ بِعِلْمٍ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

(6:143) These are eight couples, two of sheep, two of goats. Now ask them: 'Is it either the two males that Allah has forbidden or the two females, or what the wombs of the two females may contain? Tell me about this on the basis of sure knowledge, if you speak the truth.' (119)

(119) That is, they should come forward with arguments based on sound, reliable knowledge, rather than with arguments which have no authority except that of ancestral tradition, conjecture or superstition.

وَمِنَ الْاِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ ۗ قُلْ ءٰٓالذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ اَمِ الْاُنْثَيَيْنِ اَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ
اَرْحَامُ الْاُنْثَيَيْنِ ۗ اَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَآءَ اِذْ وَصّٰىكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِهٰذَا ۚ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى
اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا لِّيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

(6:144) And likewise, of camels there are two, and of oxen there are two. Ask them: 'Is it either the two males that He has forbidden or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? (120) Or were you present when Allah enjoined this commandment upon you?' Who, then, would be more unjust than he who fabricates a lie against Allah that he might lead people astray without knowledge. Surely Allah never guides such a wrong-doing folk.

(120) Questions as to whether the male offspring is lawful and the female is unlawful are presented in some detail to show how unreasonable their superstitions are. That the male offspring of an animal should be considered lawful for eating while the female be prohibited, or vice versa; and that an animal should itself be considered lawful, but not its offspring, is so manifestly unreasonable that common sense simply refuses to accept it, and no intelligent man can ever conceive such absurdities to have been sanctioned by God. Just as the superstitions in vogue among the Arabs were absurd, as the Qur'an stresses, likewise many other nations of the world follow even now irrational dietary

restrictions, and believe that food and drink become polluted merely by the touch of some other people.

قُلْ لَّآ اَجِدُ فِيْ مَآ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلٰى طَاعِمٍ يَّطْعَمُهٗٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ مَيْتَةً اَوْ دَمًا مَّسْفُوْحًا اَوْ لَحْمَ خِنْزِيْرٍ فَاِنَّهٗ رِجْسٌ اَوْ فِسْقًا اُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ بِهٖ ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَّلَا عَادٍ فَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ١٤٥

(6:145) Tell them (O Muhammad!): 'I do not find in what has been revealed to me anything forbidden for anyone who wants to eat unless it is carrion, outpoured blood and the flesh of swine, all of which is unclean; or that which is profane having been slaughtered in a name other than that of Allah. (121) But whosoever is constrained to it by necessity - neither desiring to disobey nor exceeding the limit of necessity - your Lord is surely All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

(121) See for this (Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 173), (Surah Al-Maidah 5: 3) and (Surah Al-Nahl 16: 115.) The slight difference between this verse and (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:173)is that whereas the latter mentions 'blood' as prohibited, the present verse qualifies it with 'outpoured', i.e. the blood which has flowed as a result of either injuring or slaughtering an animal. This, in fact, constitutes an elucidation of the former injunction rather than the revelation of a different one. Likewise,(Surah Al-Maidah 5: 3)mentions the prohibition of certain other categories - animals strangled or killed by blows, those which have died from either falling or goring, and those devoured by a beast of prey, in addition to the four classes mentioned here. This is not an independent, divergent injunction; it is rather an explanation signifying that the animals thus killed fall into the category of 'carrion'.

There is a group of Muslim jurists who believe that prohibition is confined to these four classes of animal food, and that the eating of everything else is lawful. This was also the view of 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas and 'A'ishah. Several traditions, however, indicate that the Prophet (peace be on him) either told people not to eat certain things or expressed his disapproval at their eating them, for example, domesticated donkeys, beasts with canine teeth and birds with claws. It is for this reason that the majority of

jurists do not consider prohibition confined to these four classes but extend it to several others. These jurists disagree, however, on which of those things are unlawful and which are lawful. Abu Hanifah, Malik and Shafi'i, for example, consider domesticated donkeys to be unlawful. Others argue that the Prophet (peace be on him) forbade them on a special occasion and because of a special reason. To cite another example, the Hanafi jurists hold wild beasts, birds of prey and animals which feed on carrion to be absolutely unlawful, whereas Milik and Awza'i hold birds of prey to be lawful. Layth considers the cat to be lawful. In the same way, Shafi'i considers prohibition to be confined only to those beasts which actually attack man, such as lion, wolf, tiger and so on. In the opinion of another jurist, 'Ikrimah, both crow and badger are lawful. Likewise, whereas the Hanafi jurists declare all crawling creatures to be prohibited, Ibn Abi Layla, Malik and Awza'i hold the snake to be lawful.
Upon reflection of these divergent opinions and the arguments adduced in support of them, it becomes clear that categorical prohibition embraces only those four classes mentioned in the Qur'an. As for other types of animal food, regarding which the jurists have expressed a negative view, they seem to carry varying degrees of religious disapprobation. The things whose disapprobation is established by statements of the Prophet (peace be on him) transmitted to us through sound traditions, are relatively close to 'prohibition'. As for things regarding which them is disagreement among jurists, their religious disapprobation becomes doubtful.

Temperamental dislike, however, is quite a different matter. The Law Of God does not force anyone to eat everything which is not prohibited. At the same time, the Law does not entitle anybody to exalt his personal likes and dislikes into a criterion of what is lawful and unlawful. No one is justified in reproaching others for consuming lawful things which offend his tastes.

وَ عَلَى الَّذِيۡنَ هَادُوۡا حَرَّمۡنَا كُلَّ ذِىۡ ظُفُرٍ ۚ وَ مِنَ الۡبَقَرِ وَ الۡغَنَمِ حَرَّمۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ شُحُوۡمَهُمَا اِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتۡ ظُهُوۡرُهُمَآ اَوِ الۡحَوَايَآ اَوۡ مَا اخۡتَلَطَ بِعَظۡمٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ جَزَيۡنٰهُمۡ بِبَغۡيِهِمۡ ۫ وَ اِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوۡنَ ﴿۱۴۶﴾

(6:146) And to those who had Judaized We have forbidden all beasts with claws, and the fat of oxen and sheep except the fat which is either on their backs or their entrails, or that which sticks to the bones. Thus did We requite them for their rebellion. (122) Surely We state the Truth.

(122) This is discussed at three places in the Qur'an. (Surah Ale-Imran 3:93) states: 'All food was lawful to the Children of Israel except what Israel made unlawful to themselves before the revelation of the Torah. Tell them: "Bring the Torah and recite any passage of it if you are truthful".' (Surah An-Nisa' 4:160) mentions that because of the misdeeds of the Children of Israel: 'We forbade them many clean things which had earlier been made lawful to them.' And now the present verse says that because of the transgression of the Jews, God forbade unto them 'all beasts with claws; and the fat of oxen and the sheep except the fat which is either on their backs or their entrails or that which sticks to the bones'. If these three verses are taken together, it becomes clear that the differences between Islamic law and Jewish law with regard to what is lawful and what is unlawful in animal foods stem from two considerations. First, that several centuries before the revelation of the Torah, Isra'il (Jacob, peace be on him) had given up the use of certain things, which his descendants also abstained from consuming. The result was that Jewish jurists considered them to be absolutely unlawful and recorded their prohibition in the Torah. They included the camel, the hare and the rock-badger, the prohibition of which is mentioned in the fragments of the Torah embodied in the Bible. (See Leviticus ll: 4; Deuteronomy 14: 7) But the Our'an challenges the Jews to come forward with the Torah itself and show where any of those things had been declared unlawful. Their inability to do so shows that those interdictions must have been later interpolations into the Torah.

Second, when the Jews rebelled against the Law revealed by God and set themselves up as their own law-givers, they made several things unlawful for themselves, and as a punishment God allowed them to remain a prey to that misunderstanding. These include birds with claws such as the ostrich, seagull and water-

hen, and also the fat of oxen and sheep. In the Bible prohibitions of these kinds have been interpolated among the injunctions of the Torah. (See Leviticus 3:17; 7:22-3; ll:16-18; Deuteronomy 14:14-16.) But (Surah An-Nisa' 4:160) shows that those things had not been made unlawful by the Torah itself. They had rather been prohibited after the time of Jesus, and history bears witness to the fact that the present Jewish law was given a definitive formulation by the Jewish jurist, Yehudah, towards the end of the second century of the Christian calendar.

It might be asked in view of what has been mentioned above, why the expression 'We forbade for them' is employed in (Surah An-Nisa' 4:160) The answer is that declaration through a Prophet or a heavenly Book is not God's only way of prohibiting. Another way is to allow fraudulent law-makers and sham jurists to gain predominating influence upon God's rebels. These in turn deprive them of many good, clean things of life by making them believe that they are prohibited. The first kind of prohibition is an act of His mercy, whereas the second kind is in the nature of a curse and punishment from God.

فَاِ كَذَّبُو كَ فَقُ رَّبُّكُمۡ ذُو رَحۡمَةٍ وَّاسِعَةٍ وَ لَا يُرَدُّ بَاۡسُ عَنِ الۡ مِ الۡ مُجۡرِمِيۡنَ ١۴٧

(6:147) 'Then if they give you the lie, say: 'Your Lord is of unbounded mercy; but His punishment shall not be averted from the guilty folk.' (123)

(123) If they could still give up their disobedience and return to the true service of God, they would find Him ready to embrace them with His mercy. But if they persisted, they should remember that no one could save them from His wrath.

سَيَقُوۡلُ الَّذِيۡنَ اَشۡرَكُوۡا لَوۡ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مَا اَشۡرَكۡنَا وَ لَاۤ اٰبَآؤُنَا وَ لَا حَرَّمۡنَا مِنۡ شَيۡءٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيۡنَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِهِمۡ حَتّٰى ذَاقُوۡا بَاۡسَنَا ؕ قُلۡ هَلۡ عِنۡدَكُمۡ مِّنۡ عِلۡمٍ فَتُخۡرِجُوۡهُ لَنَا ؕ اِنۡ تَتَّبِعُوۡنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَ اِنۡ اَنۡتُمۡ اِلَّا تَخۡرُصُوۡنَ ١۴٨

(6:148) Those who associate others with Allah in His divinity will now surely say: 'Had Allah willed, neither we nor our forefathers would have associated others with Allah in His divinity,

nor would we have declared anything (which Allah did not forbid) as forbidden.' (124) Even so those who had lived before them gave the lie (to the Truth) until they tasted Our chastisement. Tell them: 'Have you any sure knowledge that you can produce before us? In fact you are only following idle fancies, merely conjecturing.'

(124) Their apology for their crimes and misdeeds would be that which has always been advanced by criminals and wrong-doers - an apology based on the assumption of absolute determinism. They would plead that when they associated others with God in His divinity, or unwarrantedly regarded certain things as prohibited, they did so because those acts had been willed for them by God. Had He not so willed, they would not have been able to do what they did. Hence, since they were doing everything according to the will of God, everything was proper. If anyone was to blame, it was God and not they. They were under compulsion to do what they did, for the ability to do otherwise lay beyond their power.

قُلۡ فَلِلَّهِ ٱلۡحُجَّةُ ٱلۡبَٰلِغَةُۖ فَلَوۡ شَآءَ لَهَدَىٰكُمۡ أَجۡمَعِينَ ١٤٩

(6:149) 'Then say to them: '(As against your argument) Allah's is the conclusive argument. Surely, had He willed, He would have guided you all to the Truth. (125)

(125) This provides a complete refutation of their apology. In order to appreciate it fully, careful analysis is required. In the first place they are told that citing God's will to justify one's errors and misdeeds, and making it a pretext for refusing to accept true guidance was the practice of the evil-doers before them. But they should remember that this had led to their ruin and they themselves were witnesses to the evil consequences of deviation from the Truth.

Furthermore, it is being clarified that the plea of the unbelievers that the only reason for their error was that God had not willed that they be guided to the Truth, is based on fancy and conjecture rather than on sound knowledge. They refer to God's

will without understanding the relationship between God's will and man's action. They entertain the misconception that if a man commits theft under the will of God, that does not mean that he will not be reckoned a criminal. For the fact is that whichever path a man chooses, be it that of gratitude or un-gratitude to God of guidance or error, obedience or disobedience, God will open that path for him, and thereafter God will permit and enable him within the framework of His universal scheme, and to the extent that He deems fit - to do whatever he chooses to do whether it is right or wrong.

If their forefathers had been enabled by God's will to associate others with Him in His divinity and prohibit clean things, that did not mean that they were not answerable for their misdeeds. On the contrary, everyone will be held responsible for choosing false ways, for having a false intent, and for having striven for false ends.

The crucial point is succinctly made at the end in the words: 'Then say to- them, (As against your argument) Allah's is the conclusive argument. Surely, had He willed, He would have guided you all to the Truth.' The argument which they put forward, viz. 'If Allah had willed, neither we nor our forefathers could have associated others with Allah in His divinity', does not embody the whole truth. The whole truth is that 'had He willed, He would have guided you all to the Truth'. In other words, they were not prepared to take the Straight Way of their own choice and volition. As it was not God's intent to create them with inherent right guidance like the angels, they would be allowed to persist in the error they had chosen for themselves.

لِۡقُ لۡمَّ شُهَدَآءَكُمُ الَّذِيۡنَ يَشۡهَدُوۡنَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ حَرَّمَ هٰذَا ۚ فَاِنۡ شَهِدُوۡا فَلَا تَشۡهَدۡ مَعَهُمۡ ۚ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعۡ اَهۡوَآءَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَذَّبُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَ الَّذِيۡنَ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِالۡاٰخِرَةِ وَهُمۡ بِرَبِّهِمۡ يَعۡدِلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۵۰﴾

(6:150) Say to them: 'Call your witnesses to testify that Allah forbade such-and-such.' Then if they do testify, neither testify with them (126) nor follow the desires of those who have given the lie to Our signs and who do not believe in the Hereafter and set up equals with their Lord.

(126) A person who is conscious that he should testify only to that which he knows, can never testify that the taboos regarding food and other customs prevalent in their society had been enjoined by God. But if some people are brazen enough to feel no compunction in bearing false witness, then at least the believers should not become their partners in lying. The real purpose in asking them to testify honestly whether their customs and practices had in fact been sanctioned by God, is to stimulate those with some sense of honesty to reflect on the character of their customs and practices. Perhaps when they realize that there is no evidence of those prohibitions having been prescribed by God, some of them may decide to get rid of them.

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۖ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ ۖ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ ۖ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ ۖ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

(6:151) Say to them (O Muhammad!): 'Come, let me recite what your Lord has laid down to you: (127) (i) that you associate nothing with Him; (128) (ii) and do good to your parents; (129) (iii) and do not slay your children out of fear of poverty. We provide you and will likewise provide them with sustenance; (iv) and do not even draw to things shameful (130) - be they open or secret; (v) and do not slay the soul sanctified by Allah except in just cause; (131) this He has enjoined upon you so that you may understand;

(127) The restrictions which had shackled their lives were not those imposed by God. The really worthwhile restrictions are those prescribed by God in order to regulate human life. These have always served as the essential basis of all God-given codes (cf. Exodus. chapter 20).

(128) The first principle is that they should associate none with God in His divinity: neither in His essence, nor in His attributes, nor in His powers and authority, nor in the rights He has against

His creatures.

To associate someone with God in His divinity is to declare that the former shares the essence of God's divinity. Instances of associating others in God's essence are the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the belief of the pagan Arabs that angels are daughters of God, and the belief of other polytheists in the divine character of their self-styled gods and goddesses and, in some cases, of their royalty. Likewise, a person associates others in the attributes of God when he considers someone other than God to be invested with those attributes which belong exclusively to God. One becomes guilty of this kind of polytheism if one believes somebody either to know all the mysteries of the Unseen or to be all-seeing and all-hearing or to be free of all defects and weaknesses and thus infallible. Again, a person associates others in the authority of God when he recognizes someone to be possessed of authority which belongs to God alone by virtue of His godhead; for example, the power to either benefit or harm people in a supernatural manner, to fulfil the needs of people and rescue them from distress. to protect and shield them, to hear their prayers, to make or mar their fate. A person is guilty of the same when he recognizes someone as possessing the rightful authority to determine what is lawful and what is unlawful, and to make laws for the regulation of human life. Such authority belongs to God alone, and recognizing anyone other than God as possessing it is tantamount to associating others with God in His authority.

Moreover, to associate others with God in His divine rights means that one recognizes someone beside God as legitimately deserving that which may he asked of man by God alone, viz. bowing and prostrating, standing in awe and reverence with folded hands, devotional greeting and kissing the earth, slaughtering animals and making any other offerings in thanksgiving for his grace and benevolence and in acknowledgement of his overlordship, vowing offerings in his name, calling him to rescue one from one's affliction and misfortune, and all the other forms of worship, adoration and reverence which are exclusively for God. In the same way, no one

has the-right to be loved to the exclusion of all other attachments, or to be held in such awe that one always fears his wrath and dreads the violation of his command, both openly and in secret. Likewise, it is God - and God alone - Who has the right to be obeyed unconditionally, and Whose guidance should be considered the only criterion of right and wrong. In the same way, man should not commit himself to obey any authority which is either independent of obedience to God or whose command lacks the sanction of God.
If someone accords any of these rights to anyone other than God, he is guilty of associating others with God in His divinity. His guilt is the same whether or not he calls such beings divine.

(129) Accordingly, good treatment of one's parents includes showing them respect and reverence, obeying them, trying to keep them pleased, and serving them. The Qur'an always mentions this right of the parents immediately after mentioning the duty one owes to God alone. This makes it quite clear that the rights of parents have precedence over those of other human beings.

(130) The word fawahish applies to all those acts whose abominable character is self-evident. In the Qur'an all extra-marital sexual relationships, sodomy, nudity, false accusations of unchastity, and taking as one's wife a woman who had been married to one's father, are specifically reckoned as 'shameful deeds' (fawahish). In Hadith, theft, taking intoxicating drinks and begging have been characterized as fawahish, as have many other brazenly indecent acts. Man is required to abstain from them both openly and in secret.

(131) This means that human life, which has been declared inviolable by God, can only be destroyed for just cause. As for what is meant by 'just cause', we ought to remember that three cases are embodied in the Qur'an whereas two additional cases have been stated by the Prophet (peace be on him). The cases mentioned by the Qur'an are the following:

(1) That a man is convicted of deliberate homicide and thus the claim of retaliation is established against him.

(2) That someone resists the establishment of the true faith so that fighting against him might become necessary.

(3) That someone is guilty of spreading disorder in the Domain of Islam and strives to overthrow the Islamic order of government.

The two cases mentioned in the Hadith are:

(1) That a person commits illegitimate sexual intercourse even after marriage.

(2) That a Muslim is guilty of apostasy and rebellion against the Muslim body-politic.

Except for these five reasons, slaying a human being is not permissible, regardless of whether he is a believer, a protected non-Muslim (dhimmi) or an ordinary unbeliever.

وَ لَا تَقۡرَبُوۡا مَالَ الۡيَتِيۡمِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِىۡ هِىَ اَحۡسَنُ حَتّٰى يَبۡلُغَ اَشُدَّهٗ‌ وَ اَوۡفُوا الۡكَيۡلَ وَ الۡمِيۡزَانَ بِالۡقِسۡطِ‌ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفۡسًا اِلَّا وُسۡعَهَا‌ وَ اِذَا قُلۡتُمۡ فَاعۡدِلُوۡا وَ لَوۡ كَانَ ذَا قُرۡبٰى‌ وَ بِعَهۡدِ اللّٰهِ اَوۡفُوۡا‌ ؕ ذٰلِكُمۡ وَصّٰىكُمۡ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَذَكَّرُوۡنَ ۝۱۵۲

(6:152) (vi) and do not even draw near to the property of the orphan in his minority except in the best manner; (132) (vii) and give full measures and weight with justice; We do not burden anyone beyond his capacity; (133) (viii) When you speak, be just, even though it concern a near of kin; (ix) and fulfil the covenant of Allah. (134) That is what He has enjoined upon you so that you may take heed.

(132) That is, one's handling of the property of orphans should be based on maximum selflessness, sincerity and well-wishing for the orphans; it should be of a kind which lends itself to no reproach, either from God or man.

(133) Even though this is a full-fledged postulate of the law of God, it is mentioned here in order to stress that one who tries to

remain fair and just to the utmost of his ability, in giving weight and measure and in his dealings with people, will be acquitted of responsibility for error. If any mistakes in weight or measure occur out of oversight, and thus involuntarily, he will not be punished.

(134) 'Covenant of Allah' signifies, in the first place, the commitment to God, as well as to human beings, to which man binds himself in His name. It also signifies that covenant between man and God, as well as between one human being and another which automatically takes place the moment a person is born onto God's earth and into human society. The first two covenants mentioned are voluntary and deliberate whereas the last one is natural. The last one is no less binding than the first two, even though man does not make it of his own volition. For when man enjoys his own existence, makes use of his physical and mental energy, benefits from the means of sustenance and natural resources - in other words, when he benefits from the world created by God and avails himself of the opportunities provided for him by the operation of natural laws - he incurs certain obligations towards God. In the same way, when one derives nourishment and sustenance from the blood of one's mother while in her womb, when one opens one's eyes in a family which is supported by the toil of one's father, when one benefits from the various institutions of human society, one is placed in varying degrees of obligation towards those individuals and institutions. This covenant between man and God and between man and society is inscribed, not on a piece of paper, but on every fibre of man's being. Man has not entered into this covenant consciously and deliberately, yet the whole of his being owes itself to it. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:27) alludes to this covenant when it says that it is the transgressors 'who break the covenant of Allah after its firm binding, and cut asunder what Allah has commanded to be joined, and spread mischief on earth'. It is also mentioned in (Surah al-Araf 7:172)in the following words: 'And recall when your Lord took the children of Adam from their loins and made them testify as to themselves saying, "Am I not your Lord?" (to which) they answered, "Yes, we do bear witness thereto. "

وَ اَنَّ ٰ ذَا صِرَاطِ ۪ مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُ ۥ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُ ۡ مۡ عَ سَبِيلِ ۦ ؕ ذٰلِكُمۡ وَصّٰكُم ۢ بِ ۦ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ١٥٣

(6:153) (x) This is My way -that which is straight: follow it, then, and do not follow other paths lest they scatter you from His path. (135) This is what He has enjoined upon you, so that you may beware.'

(135) It is an essential corollary of the natural covenant mentioned above that man should follow the way prescribed by his Lord; any deflection from the orders of God, or serving anyone other than Him, constitutes a primary breach of that covenant. Once this breach has been committed every single article of the covenant is likely to be violated one after the other. Moreover, it should also be remembered that man cannot acquit himself of the highly delicate, extensive and complex set of responsibilities entailed by this covenant unless he accepts the guidance of God and tries to follow the way prescribed by Him.

Non-acceptance of God's guidance necessarily produces two grave and damaging consequences. First, by following any other way, one is inevitably led away from the true path and is thus deprived of the opportunity to approach God and please Him. Second, as soon as man deviates from the Straight Way prescribed by God, he encounters a whole labyrinth of highways and byways, causing the entire human species to fall a prey to total bewilderment and perplexity, and which shatters all dreams of a steady advance towards maturity and betterment. The words 'follow not other paths for they will scatter you away from His path' hint at this damage. See (Surah al-Maidah 5, n. 35) above.

ثُمَّ اٰتَيۡنَا مُوسَى الۡكِتٰبَ تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِىۡۤ اَحۡسَنَ وَ تَفۡصِيۡلًا لِّكُلِّ شَىۡءٍ وَّ هُدًى وَّ رَحۡمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمۡ بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّهِمۡ يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ١٥٤

(6:154) Then We gave to Moses the Book, completing the benediction of Allah upon the one who acts righteously, spelling out everything clearly, a guidance and a mercy; so that they may believe in their meeting with their Lord. (136)

(136) To believe in 'meeting with the Lord' signifies the conviction that one is answerable to God, and which leads one to adopt responsible behavior in life.

The statement made here could mean two things. It might mean that the teachings of the heavenly Book vouchsafed to Moses could itself create a sense of responsibility among the Israelites. Alternatively, it might mean that when ordinary people observe the wonderful way of life prescribed by God, and note the beneficial effects of its merciful dispensation in the lives of righteous people, they will come to realize that belief in the After-life is, in all respects, a better basis for human life than its denial. In this way, their observation and study might turn them from rejection to true faith.

وَ هٰذَا كِتٰبٌ اَنۡزَلۡنٰهُ مُبٰرَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوۡهُ وَ اتَّقُوۡا لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُرۡحَمُوۡنَ ۱۵۵

(6:155) And likewise We revealed this (Book) - a blessed one. Follow it, then, and become God-fearing; you may be shown mercy.

اَنۡ تَقُوۡلُوۡۤا اِنَّمَاۤ اُنۡزِلَ الۡكِتٰبُ عَلٰى طَآئِفَتَيۡنِ مِنۡ قَبۡلِنَا وَ اِنۡ كُنَّا عَنۡ دِرَاسَتِهِمۡ لَغٰفِلِيۡنَ ۙ ۱۵۶

(6:156) (You may no longer) say now that the Book was revealed only to two groups of people before Us (137) and that we had indeed been unaware of what they read.

(137) The allusion is to the Jews and the Christians.

اَوۡ تَقُوۡلُوۡا لَوۡ اَنَّاۤ اُنۡزِلَ عَلَيۡنَا الۡكِتٰبُ لَكُنَّاۤ اَهۡدٰى مِنۡهُمۡ ۚ فَقَدۡ جَآءَكُمۡ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّنۡ رَّبِّكُمۡ وَ هُدًى وَّ رَحۡمَةٌ ۚ فَمَنۡ اَظۡلَمُ مِمَّنۡ كَذَّبَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَ صَدَفَ عَنۡهَا ؕ سَنَجۡزِى الَّذِيۡنَ يَصۡدِفُوۡنَ عَنۡ اٰيٰتِنَا سُوۡٓءَ الۡعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَصۡدِفُوۡنَ ۱۵۷

(6:157) Nor may you claim that: 'Had the Book been revealed to us, we would have been better guided than they.' Surely clear evidence has come to you from your Lord, which is both a guidance and a mercy. Who, then, is more unjust than he who gave the lie to the signs of Allah and turned away from

them? (138) And We shall soon requite those who turn away from Our signs with a severe chastisement for having turned away.

(138) 'Signs of Allah' include the teachings embodied in the Qur'an. They are also manifest in the noble life of the Prophet (peace be on him), and the pure lives of those who believed in him. Tley also include the natural phenomena to which the Qur'an refers in support of its message.

هَلۡ يَنۡظُرُوۡنَ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ تَاۡتِيَهُمُ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوۡ يَاۡتِىَ رَبُّكَ اَوۡ يَاۡتِىَ بَعۡضُ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّكَ‌ؕ يَوۡمَ يَاۡتِىۡ بَعۡضُ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنۡفَعُ نَفۡسًا اِيۡمَانُهَا لَمۡ تَكُنۡ اٰمَنَتۡ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ اَوۡ كَسَبَتۡ فِىۡۤ اِيۡمَانِهَا خَيۡرًا‌ؕ قُلِ انۡتَظِرُوۡۤا اِنَّا مُنۡتَظِرُوۡنَ ١٥٨

(6:158) What! Do they wait either for the angels to appear before them or for your Lord to come unto them or for some clear signs of your Lord1 (139) to appear before them? When some clear signs of your Lord will appear, believing will be of no avail to anyone who did not believe before, or who earned no good deeds through his faith. (140) Say: 'Wait on; we too are waiting.'

(139) That is, either tokens of the approach of the Day of Reckoning or God's scourge or any other sign that will uncover the Truth, after which there will be no reason left for testing man.

(140) Those tokens will be so clear that after their appearance it will neither avail the unbeliever to repent of his unbelief nor the disobedient to forsake his disobedience. For faith and obedience have meaning and value only as long as the Truth remains hidden, as long as the tenure of life granted to people does not seem to have approached its end and the world with all its vanities continues to delude man that, as there may neither be God nor After-life, one should eat, drink and enjoy oneself as best one can.

اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ فَرَّقُوۡا دِيۡنَهُمۡ وَكَانُوۡا شِيَعًا لَّسۡتَ مِنۡهُمۡ فِىۡ شَىۡءٍ‌ؕ اِنَّمَاۤ اَمۡرُهُمۡ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمۡ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَفۡعَلُوۡنَ ١٥٩

(6:159) Surely you have nothing to do with those who have made divisions in their religion and become factions. [141] Their matter is with Allah and He will indeed tell them (in time) what they have been doing.

(141) This is addressed to the Prophet (peace be on him) and through him to all followers of the true faith. The import of this statement is that true faith has always consisted, and still consists, in recognizing the One True God as one's God and Lord; in associating none with God in His divinity - neither in respect of His essence, nor of His attributes, nor of His claims upon His creatures; in believing in the Hereafter and hence considering oneself answerable before God; and in living according to those principles and values which have been communicated by God to mankind through His Prophets and Books. This was the religion entrusted to man at the beginning of human life. The religions which emerged later stemmed from the perverted ingenuity of man, from his baser lusts, and from an exaggerated sense of devotion to venerable personalities. Such factors corrupted the original religion and overlaid it with harmful innovations. Hence, people modified and distorted the original beliefs by mixing them with products of their conjecture and philosophical thinking. More and more innovations were added to the original laws of the true religion. Putting aside the Law of God, men set themselves up as their own law-makers, indulged in hair-splitting elaborations, and exaggerated the importance of disagreements in minor legal problems. They showed excessive veneration for some Prophets of God and some standard-bearers of the true religion, and directed their rancor and hatred against the others. Thus there emerged innumerable religions and sects, the birth of each leading to the fragmentation of humanity into an ever-increasing number of mutually hostile groups. Anyone who decides to follow the true religion must therefore cut himself off from all factions and chart an independent course.

مَنْ جَآءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهٗ عَشْرُ اَمْثَالِهَا ۚ وَمَنْ جَآءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزٰٓى اِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

(6:160) Whoever will come to Allah with a good deed shall have ten times as much, and whoever will come to Allah with an evil deed, shall be requited with no more than the like of it. They shall not be wronged.

قُلۡ اِنَّنِیۡ ہَدٰىنِیۡ رَبِّیۡۤ اِلٰی صِرَاطٍ مُّسۡتَقِیۡمٍ ۚ دِیۡنًا قِیَمًا مِّلَّۃَ اِبۡرٰہِیۡمَ حَنِیۡفًا ۚ وَ مَا کَانَ مِنَ
الۡمُشۡرِکِیۡنَ ﴿۱۶۱﴾

(6:161) Say: 'As for me, my Lord has guided me on to a straight way, a right religion, the way of Abraham (142) who adopted it in exclusive devotion to Allah, and he was not of those who associated others with Allah in His divinity.'

(142) The 'Way of Abraham' is one further indication of the way of true religion which one is required to follow. This way could also have been designated as the way of Moses or of Jesus But since their names have become falsely associated with Judaism and Christianity respectively, it was necessary to call it the 'Way of Abraham'. Moreover, Abraham was acknowledged by both the Jews and the Christians as rightly-guided and both knew, of course, that he lived long before either Judaism or Christianity was born. In the same way, the polytheists of Arabia also considered Abraham to be rightly-guided. Despite their ignorance, they at least acknowledged that that righteous man, who had founded the Kabah, was a worshipper of God exclusively and no idolator.

قُلۡ اِنَّ صَلَاتِیۡ وَ نُسُکِیۡ وَ مَحۡیَایَ وَ مَمَاتِیۡ لِلّٰہِ رَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِیۡنَ ﴿۱۶۲﴾

(6:162) Say: 'Surely my Prayer, all my acts of worship, (143) and my living and my dying are for Allah alone, the Lord of the whole universe.

(143) 'The Arabic word nusuk used here signifies ritual sacrifice as well as the other forms of devotion and worship.

لَا شَرِیۡکَ لَہٗ ۚ وَ بِذٰلِکَ اُمِرۡتُ وَ اَنَا اَوَّلُ الۡمُسۡلِمِیۡنَ ﴿۱۶۳﴾

(6:163) He has no associate. Thus have I been bidden, and I am the foremost of those who submit themselves (to Allah).

قُلۡ اَغَيۡرَ اللّٰهِ اَبۡغِىۡ رَبًّا وَّهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ ؕ وَلَا تَكۡسِبُ كُلُّ نَفۡسٍ اِلَّا عَلَيۡهَا ۚ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزۡرَ اُخۡرٰى ۚ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمۡ مَّرۡجِعُكُمۡ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمۡ بِمَا كُنۡتُمۡ فِيۡهِ تَخۡتَلِفُوۡنَ ۱۶۴

(6:164) Say: 'Shall I seek someone other than Allah as Lord when He is the Lord of everything?' (144) Everyone will bear the consequence of what he does, and no one shall bear the burden of another. (145) Thereafter, your return will be to your Lord, whereupon He will let you know what you disagreed about.

(144) Since God is the Lord of the entire universe, how could anyone be His lord? Since the entire universe is yoked to obedience to God, man is an integral part of the universe, how can he reasonably, look for another lord in that area of his life in which he uses his own volition and judgement? Is it appropriate for him to move in diametrical opposition to the entire universe?

(145) Every person is responsible for whatever he does; and no one is responsible for the deeds of others.

وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَكُمْ خَلٰٓئِفَ الْاَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجٰتٍ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِيْ مَآ اٰتٰىكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيْعُ الْعِقَابِ ۚ وَاِنَّهٗ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ١٦٥ۧ

(6:165) For He it is Who has appointed you vicegerent over the earth, and has exalted some of you over others in rank that He may try you in what He has bestowed is upon you. (146) Indeed your Lord is swift in retribution, and He is certainly All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

(146) This statement embodies three important truths: First, that human beings as such are vicegerents of God on earth, so that God has entrusted them with many things and endowed them with the power to use them. Second, it is God Himself Who has created differences of rank among His vicegerents. The trust placed in some is more than that of others. Some men have been granted control of more resources than others. Some are more gifted in respect of their abilities. Likewise, some human beings have been placed under the trust of others. Third, all this is indeed designed to test man. The entire life. of man is in fact, a vast examination wherein man is being tested about the trust he has received from God: how sensitive he is to that trust, to what extent he lives up to it, and to what extent he proves to be competent with it. What position man will be able to attain in the Next Life depends on the result of this test.